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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REVEREND AND LEARNED

ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

CONTAINING, BESIDES HIS

SERMONS, AND ESSAYS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS,

SEVERAL ADDITIONAL PIECES,

Selected from his Manuscripts

BY THE

REV. DR. JENNINGS, AND THE REV. DR. DODDRIDGE, IN 1753:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

COMPILED

BY THE REV. GEORGE BURDER.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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AN

HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TOWARDS THE

REVIVAL OF PRACTICAL RELIGION

AMONG

CHRISTIANS,

BY A

SERIOUS ADDRESS TO MINISTERS AND PEOPLE,

IN SOME OCCASIONAL DISCOURSES.

THE

PREFACE.

AMONG the papers published last year, there hath been some enquiry made, whether there be any decay of the dissenting interest, and what may be supposed to have been the occasion of it. So far as I have searched into that matter, I have been informed, that whatsoever decrease may have appeared in some places, there have been sensible advances in others. And without entering into any debate about the particular reasons of its declension in any town whatsoever,* I am well satisfied that the great and general reason is the decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, and the little success which the ministrations of the gospel have had of late for the conversion of sinners to holiness, and the recovery of them from the state of corrupt nature, and *the course of this world, to the life of God by Jesus Christ.* If this be not our hope and design, the support of the dissenting interest is but of little importance. What is it that we mean by asserting the rights and freedom of conscience in our separation from the established church, but more effectually to promote the kingdom of God amongst men, to do more honour to the name of Christ our Saviour in his institutions, and better to carry on the blessed work of the salvation of souls?

But if these things are not happily promoted amongst us, it is no wonder that persons release themselves from all the inconveniences that in some places may attend their separation from a public establishment, especially when it is so evident that the allurements of riches and honours, and public trusts and offices lie all on that side.

Nor is the complaint of the declension of virtue and piety made only by the protestant dissenters: It is a general matter of mournful observation amongst all that lay the cause of God to heart: And therefore it cannot be thought amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for the recovery of dying religion in the world. And since something may be done amongst the ministers, and something among the people, to attain this desirable end, I have been persuaded to publish these following exhortations, or addresses, which are directed both to the one and the other.

The exhortation to ministers was composed at the request of my worthy friend and brother Mr. John Oakes, and designed to have been delivered at his public ordination in the congregation of dissenting protestants, at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, on November 12, 1729. But the providence of God prevented me from fulfilling that service by confining me to a bed of sickness on that day. In the composition of that discourse, my thoughts ran out to four or five times the length of what would have been sufficient for that service, so that I must have greatly contracted it in the delivery: But being much importuned, both by my reverend brother, who has perused far the greatest part of it, and by the congregation now under his care, to make it public, I have revised it with a

* This whole affair is set in the best light in a little pamphlet, entitled "Free Thoughts on the most probable Means of reviving the Dissenting Interest, occasioned by a late Enquiry into the Causes of its Decay."
N. B. It was written by the late Rev. Dr. Philip Doddridge.

larger view, and humbly hope that my younger brethren in the ministry may be in some measure excited and encouraged hereby to do their part toward the revival of decaying piety. It is expressly with this view and design, that my worthy friend Mr. David Some, in Leicestershire, published an excellent sermon last year, the perusal whereof I would heartily recommend to all my brethren.

The following exhortation to the people was delivered in several discourses to the congregation which *I serve in the gospel;* and I would hope it has made some serious impressions on the minds of those who heard it, since it had been much desired that they might have a review of it by the assistance of the press. Among the many motives which may be urged upon the consciences of our hearers, in order to awaken them to *strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die,* I thought it not improper to borrow some arguments for this purpose from their own profession as protestant dissenters, and as separating from the established worship of the nation: And this I have done without entering into a detail of all the grounds of our practice, or vindicating the cause of nonconformity, which has been sufficiently performed by other writers. While we quit all the outward advantages of the national establishment by worshipping in separate assemblies, it is presumed, in the nature of things, that we do it, or at least that we should do it, upon the prospect of some better advantages for religion; and we hereby also lay ourselves under special obligations to make the best improvement of these real or supposed advantages.

But this particular motive relating to the dissenters is pursued only in the middle part of that discourse. The first and the latter sections of it are of equal concern and importance to protestants of every name and party: The sense and style are suited to common understandings: Novelties and elegancies are less needful, where the writer's whole aim is to charge and impress the conscience with the plain rules and duties of practical religion. And may the Spirit of God, by his heavenly influences, render what was designed sincerely for the revival of real godliness amongst us all, effectual to attain this blessed end!

There is no party of christians whatsoever, who have liberty to choose their own way of worship, but pretend they are blessed with some special advantages for the service of God, and their increase in piety or virtue beyond their neighbours, and these pretended advantages lay them under proportionable obligations of duty: A great part of this address, which I have made to our people, tends to enforce every sort of engagement upon their consciences, and to excite them to superior degrees of holiness; and it is the sincere desire of my soul, that our brethren of the church of England also may improve to the utmost all their public privileges of every kind, for the increase of virtue and religion. May every denomination of christians in the land maintain a holy emulation with each other, which of us shall run swiftest in the course of the christian life, and make the most eminent advances toward the heavenly world! *Amen.*

April 2, 1731.

AN

HUMBLE ATTEMPT,

&c. &c.

AN EXHORTATION TO MINISTERS.

WHEN true religion falls under a general and remarkable decay, it is time for all that are concerned to awaken and rouse themselves to fresh vigour and activity, in their several posts of service. If the interests of piety and virtue are things fit to be encouraged and maintained in the world, if *the kingdom of the blessed God* among men be worthy to be supported, surely it is a necessary and becoming zeal for every one who hath the honour to be a minister of this kingdom, to take alarm at the appearance of such danger; and each of us should enquire, What can I do to *strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die,* as well as to recover what is lost? Let my brethren therefore in the ministry forgive me, if I presume at this season to set before them a plain and serious exhortation. It was prepared for a public solemnity, wherein an esteemed young friend and brother entered into the ministerial office; and upon this account I have used much more freedom in the language than I could ever pretend to justify on any other occasion. It was in the name of my reverend brethren then present, as well as in my own, that the exhortation addresses him in the manner following:

You have this day devoted and dedicated yourself to the service of Christ in the ministry of the gospel, and particularly for the edification of this church. Your brethren in the ministry have also done all that they can do toward the dedicating and devoting you to the same sacred service, by the various solemn transactions of the day; and now we entreat, we exhort, we charge you *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* and in the words of the great apostle, that you *take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it;* Col. iv. 17. While we are endeavouring to press this charge on your conscience, we would speak also, each of us, to our own souls, and renew the awful charge upon ourselves. We would call to mind our own vows and engagements this day, and revive our decaying and dying zeal in this sacred and important service. What I have to say on this subject shall be contained under four general heads:

I. Take heed to your own personal religion, as absolutely necessary to the right discharge of the ministerial office.

II. Take heed to your private studies and preparations for public service.

III. Take heed to your public labours, and actual ministrations in the church.

IV. Take heed to your conversation in the world, and especially among the *flock of Christ over which* you preside. Bear with me while I enlarge a little upon each of these.

SECTION I.

OF A MINISTER'S PERSONAL RELIGION.

I. TAKE heed to your own personal religion, especially to the work of God in your own heart, as absolutely necessary to the right discharge of the ministerial work. Surely

4. Hereby, when you come among men in your sacred ministrations, you will appear, and speak, and act like a man come from God; *like Moses with a lustre upon his face*, when he had conversed with God; like a minister of the court of heaven employed in a divine office; like a messenger of grace who hath just been with God, and received instructions from him; and the world will *take cognizance of you, as they did of the apostles, that they were men who had been with Jesus;* Acts iv. 13.

5. This will better furnish you for serious converse with the souls and consciences of men, by giving you experimental acquaintance with the things of religion, as they are transacted in the heart. You will learn more of the springs of sin and holiness, the workings of nature and grace, *the deceitfulness of sin*, the subtilty of temptation, and the holy skill of counterworking the snares of sin, and *the devices of Satan*, and all their designs to ruin the souls of men. You will speak with more divine compassion to wretched and perishing mortals; with more life and power to stupid sinners; with more sweetness and comfort to awakened consciences, and with more awful language and influence to backsliding christians. You will hereby learn to preach more powerfully in all respects for the salvation of men, and talk more feelingly on every sacred subject, when the power, and sense, and life of godliness are kept up in your own spirit. Then on some special occasions it may not be improper to borrow the language of David the prophet, and of St. Paul and St. John, two great apostles, though it may be best in public to speak in the plural number, *We have believed, therefore we have spoken; what we have heard and learned from Christ, we have declared unto you; what we have seen and felt*, we are bold to speak; attend and *we will tell you what God has done for our souls.* You may then at proper seasons convince, direct, and comfort others by the same words of light and power, of precept and promise, of joy and hope, which have convinced, directed and comforted you; a word coming from the heart will sooner reach the heart.

SECTION II.

OF A MINISTER'S PRIVATE STUDIES.

THE second general head of exhortation relates to your own private studies: Take heed to these, that you may better fulfil your ministry. *Give yourself* (saith St. Paul to Timothy) *to reading, to meditation, that your profiting may appear to all;* 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. These private studies are of various kinds, whether you consider them in general, as necessary to furnish the mind with knowledge for the office of the ministry; or in particular, as necessary to prepare discourses for the pulpit.

1st. Those general studies may be just mentioned in this place, which furnish the mind with knowledge for the work of a minister; for though it is known you have passed through the several stages of science in your younger years, and have made a good improvement in them, yet a review of many of them will be found needful, and an increase in some (so far as leisure permits) may be proper and useful, even through the whole course of life. Among these, some are necessary to improve the reasoning faculty, to teach us to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to judge aright concerning any subjects that are proposed to us; such are the art of logic, which gives us rules for judging and reasoning, and some of the speculative principles of the mathematics, particularly the

demonstrations of geometry, and the inferences or corollaries that are drawn from them, wherein we have the clearest and fairest examples to teach us reasoning by the practice of it.

And as all arts and sciences have a connection with and influence upon each other, so for a divine as well as for a physician, it is needful there should be some knowledge of nature and the powers of it in the heavens and earth, in the air and water, that we may thereby learn and teach more of the glories of our Creator, and more easily distinguish between what is natural and what is miraculous. This will enable us also to think and speak more justly almost upon any subject which occurs in our private reading, in our public ministry, or in our daily conversation; and particularly it is useful, if not necessary for a minister to have some acquaintance with human nature, in the two constituent parts of it, soul and body, and in the powers and passions of mankind, that we may better distinguish how far particular actions are natural and mechanical, and how far they are voluntary and moral, virtuous or sinful; how far they are influenced by *flesh and blood*, and how far they are under the government of the will, which is of great importance in order to judge right in many cases of conscience, and to give directions for the moral or religious life.

It is needful also, and of considerable moment, that a divine should be acquainted with the arts of method and of oratory; the one to range our thoughts and discourses in due order, and to set the things of God before men in the plainest, the most conspicuous and convincing light; and the other to win upon the hearts of the hearers, and to lead them by a sweet and powerful influence on their affections, into the love and practice of religion. There are other parts of science which are necessary for ministers to be well acquainted with, and particularly those which are the foundations of all religion; such as the knowledge of God and his attributes by the light of nature and reason, the knowledge of man as a creature of God, in his natural dependance upon his Creator, and in his moral relations both to God and his fellow-creatures, together with the obligations to duty which are derived thence, and which branch themselves into all the parts of morality and religion. It is requisite to have some acquaintance also with the heathen writers, the folly and madness of pagan idolatry, the history and the customs of ancient ages and nations, and the history of the church of the Jews and of christians, in order to establish our faith in the doctrines of christianity, and to prove the religion of Christ to be divine, and that the Bible is the word of God.

When this great point is once settled, then our chief business will be to understand this Bible, and to find out the meaning of the holy scriptures; and for this end (as well as for the reading of ancient heathen authors) it is requisite that we should have some skill in the tongues; and particularly those wherein the scriptures were written, *viz.* Hebrew and Greek, that we may be able at least to judge a little for ourselves, concerning the translation of any text in our language. For this purpose also some knowledge of the customs of the ancients, both Jews and pagans, is necessary, in order to give us a juster idea of many things recorded in scripture; and we should get some acquaintance with geography and chronology, which will be of great service to set before our eyes, the distant places and times wherein those ancient affairs were transacted, which the scripture relates, and without which the history of scripture, as well as some of the prophecies, can never be well understood.

Nor is it an unprofitable study to read some of the writings of the fathers, who lived in the very first ages of christianity, that we may know the sentiments and customs of those who lived nearest to the days of the apostles; this may give a little light to some expressions and phrases used in scripture, and enable us sometimes better to understand what the evangelists and apostles wrote. But it must be confessed, that immediately after the apostolic age, and indeed before the apostles were dead, there were so many corruptions and mistakes both in faith and worship, so many fancies and inventions of men crept into the church, that there is scarce one ancient writer perfectly free, and not one of them to be entirely trusted, as a director of our consciences, or as a regulator of our belief or practice. St. Paul himself tells us, that in his days *the mystery of iniquity began to work;* 2 Thess. ii. 7. The fathers, as they are called, have many weak and fanciful things in their writings; it is the Bible alone that must be our guide; *the word of the Lord is pure and perfect.*

Above all things therefore, the constant reading and study of the holy scriptures are necessary, in order to a larger and more complete acquaintance with our divine religion. Here our faith and conscience may rest safely, in all our enquiries about matters of belief or practice. The doctrines, the commands, the types and histories, the prophecies, the promises and threatenings of the word of God, are the brightest and noblest part of the knowledge of a minister. These are the things *that are able to make us and our hearers wise unto salvation, and to furnish the man of God for every good word and work;* 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. Let us never imagine we know enough of divine things, while we dwell in flesh and blood. God and Christ, and the things of heaven, are fruitful and inexhaustible subjects of our enquiry and knowledge; they are so in this world, and they will be so for ever in the world to come. *The angels of God pry further into them,* nor shall the sons of men ever know them to perfection. These will be the glorious objects of everlasting study, and everlasting entertainment.

I might add in the last place, that there are some other parts of human knowledge, which, though they are not necessary, yet are greatly ornamental to a minister, in the present age, which is so much enriched with knowledge, *viz.* some further acquaintance with modern geography, the nations and kingdoms of this world; some general view of astronomy, the appearances, and seeming or real motions of the sun and moon, stars and planets, and of this earth, which is now generally agreed to be one of the planetary worlds; to which we may join some skill in philology, criticism on the writings of men as well as on scripture, and various parts of science which go under the name of the *belles lettres,* or polite learning. These are such sort of accomplishments of the mind as will embellish the character of a minister, and render his person and his labours more acceptable to the world.

But amongst all these enquiries and studies, and these various improvements of the mind, let us take heed that none of them carry our thoughts away too far from our chief and glorious design, that is, *the ministry of the gospel of Christ.* Let none of them intrench upon those hours which should be devoted to our study of the Bible, or preparations for the pulpit; and wheresoever we find our inclinations too much attached to any particular human science, let us set a guard upon ourselves, lest it rob us of our diviner studies, and our best improvement. A minister should remember, that himself, with all his studies, is consecrated to the service of the sanctuary: Let every thing be done therefore with a view to our great end: Let all the rest of our knowledge be like

lines drawn from the vast circumference of universal nature, pointing to that divine centre, *God and religion;* and let us pursue every part of science with a design to gain better qualifications thereby for our sacred work. Forgive me, my friends, that I have dwelt so long on these general preparations for the work of the ministry. Though they are learned at the academy, yet I can by no means think it proper they should be left there and forgotten.

2nd. I come to speak of those particular studies which are preparatory for the public work of the pulpit; and here when you retire to compose a sermon, let your great end be ever kept in view, *i. e.* to say something for *the honour of God, for the glory of Christ, for the salvation of the souls of men;* and for this purpose a few rules may perhaps be of some service. One great and general rule is, Ask advice of Heaven by prayer about every part of your preparatory studies; seek the direction and assistance of the Spirit of God, for inclining your thoughts to proper subjects, for guiding you to proper scriptures, and framing your whole sermon both as to the matter and manner, that it may attain the divine and sacred ends proposed. But I insist not largely on this here, because prayers for aids and counsels from heaven belong to every part of your work, both in the closet, in the pulpit, and in your daily conversation. The particular rules for your preparatory work may be such as these:

I. In choosing your texts, or themes of discourse, seek such as are most suited to do good to souls, according to the present wants, dangers, and circumstances of the people; whether for the instruction of the ignorant; for the conviction of the stupid and senseless; for the melting and softening of the obstinate; for the conversion of the wicked; for the edification of converts; for the comfort of the timorous and mournful; for gentle admonition of backsliders, or more severe reproof. Some acquaintance with the general case and character of your hearers is needful for this end.

II. In handling the text, divide, explain, illustrate, prove, convince, infer, and apply in such a manner, as to do real service to men, and honour to our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not say within yourself, How much or how elegantly I can talk upon such a text, but what can I say most usefully to those who hear me, for the instruction of their minds, for the conviction of their consciences, and for the persuasion of their hearts? Be not fond of displaying your learned criticisms in clearing up the terms and phrases of a text, where scholars only can be edified by them; nor spend away the precious moments of the congregation, in making them hear you explain what is clear enough before, and hath no need of explaining; nor in proving that which is so obvious that it wants no proof. This is little better than trifling with God and man. Think not, How can I make a sermon soonest and easiest? but how I can make the most profitable sermon for my hearers; not what fine things I can say, either in a way of criticism or philosophy, or in a way of oratory and harangue, but what powerful words I can speak to impress the consciences of them that hear with a serious and lasting sense of moral, divine, and eternal things. Judge wisely what to leave out as well as what to speak. Let not your chief design be to work up a sheet, or to hold out an hour, but to *save a soul.*

III. In speaking of the great things of God and religion, remember you are a minister of Christ and the gospel, sent to publish to men what God has revealed by his prophets and apostles, and by his Son Jesus; and not a heathen philosopher to teach the people merely what the light of reason can search out: You are not to stand up

here as a professor of ancient or modern philosophy, nor an usher in the school of Plato or Seneca, or Mr. Locke; but as a teacher in the school of Christ, as a preacher of the New Testament. You are not a jewish priest, to instruct men in the precise niceties of ancient judaisms, legal rites and ceremonies; but you are a christian minister; let christianity, therefore, run through all your composures, and spread its glories over them all.

It is granted, indeed, that reasonings from the light of nature have a considerable use in the ministry of the gospel. It is by the principles of natural religion, and by reasoning from them on the wonderful events of prophecy and miracle, &c. that we ourselves must learn the truth of the christian religion, and we must teach the people to build their faith of the gospel on just and rational grounds; and this may perhaps, at some time or other, require a few whole discourses on some of the principal themes of natural religion, in order to introduce and display the religion of Jesus. But such occasions will but seldom arise in the course of your ministry. It is granted also, that it is a very useful labour sometimes in a sermon, to shew how far the light of nature and reason will carry us on in the search of duty and happiness; and then to manifest how happily the light of scripture supplies the deficiencies of it; that the people may know how greatly they are indebted to the peculiar favour of God for the book of divine revelation.

And yet farther, since the whole of natural religion is contained and included in the gospel of Christ, it is proper sometimes to shew that reason as well as scripture confirms the same doctrines, and obliges us to practise the same duties. It is certain also that human reason, though it could not discover the religion of Christ, yet it is able to point out many admirable glories and divine condescendencies in this religion when it is discovered. It is good to impress the conscience, as well as instruct the understanding, by the two great lights that God has given us, *viz.* reason and revelation. Two such pillars will support the structure of religion better than one. And when we happen to hear any of our brethren occasionally insisting on the themes of natural religion, and enforcing the belief of truths, or the practice of duties, by the principles of reason, let us candidly suppose they are pursuing some of these designs which I have now mentioned, and that the principles and topics of revelation and christianity are in reserve, to be displayed at large in their following sermons.

In general, it is most safe and honourable for a minister of Christ, to make the gospel appear to be the reigning principle in his discourses, and make our hearers see how gloriously it has improved the religion of nature. If you speak of our natural knowledge of the attributes of God, and the truths of religion that reason dictates, shew how they are all exalted, how brightly they shine in the gospel of Christ, and what new discoveries and new glories relating to them are derived from the holy scriptures. If you speak of the duties which men owe to God, or to one another, even those which are found out by reason and natural conscience, shew how the gospel of Christ hath advanced and refined every thing that nature and reason teach us: Enforce these duties by motives of christianity, as well as by philosophical arguments drawn from the nature of things: Stir up the practice of them by *the examples of Christ and his apostles*, by that *heaven* and that *hell* which are revealed to the world by Jesus Christ our Saviour: Impress them on the heart by the constraining influence of the *mercy of God* and the *dying love of our Lord Jesus Christ*, by his *glorious appearance to judge the living and the dead*,

and by our blessed hope *of attending him* on that day. These are the appointed arguments of our holy religion, and may expect more divine success.

When you have occasion to represent what need there is of diligence and labour in the duties of holiness, shew also what aids are promised in the gospel, to humble and feeble souls who are sensible of their own frailty to resist temptations, or to discharge religious and moral duties; and what influences of the Holy Spirit may be expected by those who seek it. Let them know that Christ is exalted to send forth this Spirit, *to bestow repentance and sanctification as well as forgiveness;* for *without him we can do nothing;* Acts v. 31. John xv. 5.

As there are seasons and times proper to impress the mind with the glories of God our Creator, and to enforce the duties of morality, to teach men to govern their unruly appetites and passions, to bind all the rules of virtue on the consciences of men, and press them with zeal and fervour, according to the example of the apostles in the New Testament; so there are times and seasons to treat more at large on the peculiar truths of revelation and the glories of christianity, both for the honour of our Saviour, and for the welfare of souls. For this reason they are so largely insisted on by the holy writers, those blessed patterns of our ministry. There must be some seasons allotted to the descriptions of the sinful and miserable state of mankind as revealed in scripture; to the dignity of the person of Christ the Redeemer, *the only begotten Son of God, and the Son of Man;* to the covenant of grace, of pardon and salvation made with men, in and through this glorious Mediator; to the incarnation, life and death, the sacrifice and atonement, the resurrection, intercession, and universal government and lordship of Jesus Christ, and his *coming to judge the world at the last day;* and to the appointed methods of our participation of the blessings which he bestows. These illustrious doctrines are big with a thousand duties both to God and man; all the practices of faith and love, repentance and universal holiness flow from them by plain and easy deduction; all the sacred rules of piety and virtue, sobriety, justice and goodness, the holy skill of living and dying in the love and favour of God, are the most natural and happy inferences from these sublime truths of our religion. We preach the gospel in a very defective manner, if we neglect the moral or divine duties which are derived from the faith of Christ.

If you would raise the hearts of your hearers to a just and high esteem of this gospel of grace, and impress them with an awful sense of the divine importance and worth of it, be not afraid to lay human nature low, and to represent it in its ruins by the fall of *the first Adam.* It is the vain exaltation of ruined nature, that makes the gospel so much despised in our age. Labour, therefore, to make them see and feel the deplorable state of mankind as described in scripture, *that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,* and a sentence of *death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;* let them hear and know that *Jews and gentiles are all under sin, that there is none righteous, no, not one; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may appear guilty before God.* Let them know *that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;* that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any good thing;* that *we are without strength, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance and darkness of our understandings, and are by nature children of disobedience, and children of wrath;* that we are unable to recover ourselves out of these depths of wretchedness without the condescensions of divine grace, and that the gospel of Christ is introduced as the only sovereign remedy and relief under all this desolation of nature, this overwhelming distress; neither is there

salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved; *Acts* iv. 12. And they that wilfully and obstinately reject this message of divine love, must perish without remedy and without hope; *for there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of vengeance;* Heb. x. 26. By this conduct you will approve yourself to be a faithful messenger of Christ in good earnest, *a minister of the New Testament*, and *a workman that needs not to be ashamed*, if you take special seasons to discover to men what the word of God reveals concerning their misery, and declare to them *the whole counsel of God* for their salvation. I entreat you, my dear friend and brother, to get it deeply impressed on your heart, that as (I believe) your real and sincere design is to save the souls of men from sin and eternal death, so it is the gospel of Christ which is the only instrument whereby you can ever hope to attain this blessed end; and that for two reasons.

1. It is this gospel, which, in its own nature, is most happily suited in all the parts of it to this great design; and no other schemes which the wit or reason of man can contrive are so: It is the voice of pardoning grace and reconciliation to God by Jesus Christ, that powerfully allures and encourages the awakened sinner, to return to his duty to God and his Maker: It is the promise of divine assistance to enable us to mortify sin, and to practise holiness, which animates the feeble creature to attempt it: It is the attractive view of heavenly blessedness as revealed in the gospel, that invites the soul onward to make its way through all the dangerous enticements and terrors of this world, which is at enmity with God. The divine fitness of this gospel of grace, to restore fallen man to the favour and image of his Maker, is so various and astonishing, that to describe it in all instances would require a large volume.

And 2. As the gospel is so happily suited to attain these ends, so it is the only effectual means that God has appointed, in the lips of his ministers, for this purpose. It is with these wondrous discoveries of this gospel, that he furnished the minds and lips of the fishermen and illiterate persons, when he sent them forth to convert and save a perishing world. These were the sacred weapons with which they were armed, when our exalted Saviour gave them commission to travel through the dominions of Satan, which were spread over the heathen countries, and to raise up a kingdom for himself amongst them. It was with principles, rules, and motives, derived from this gospel, that they were sent to attack the reigning vices of mankind, to reform profligate nations, and to turn them *from dumb idols to serve the living God.* And though St. Paul were a man of learning above the rest, yet he was not sent to preach *the enticing words of man's wisdom*, nor to talk as the disputers of the age and philosophers did in their schools; but his business was to *preach Christ crucified:* Though this doctrine of the cross and the Son of God hanging upon it, was *a stumbling block to the Jews, and the Greeks counted it foolishness, yet to them that were called, both Jews and Greeks*, this doctrine was *the power of God, and the wisdom of God* for the salvation of men. And therefore St. Paul *determined to know nothing among them, in comparison of the doctrine of Christ and him crucified.* These were *the weapons of his warfare, which were mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin and Satan* in the hearts of men, and brought *every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* It was by the ministration of this gospel that the fornicators were made chaste and holy, and idolaters became worshippers of the God of heaven; that thieves learned honest labour, and the covetous were taught to seek treasures in heaven; the drunkards grew out of love with their cups, and re-

nounced all intemperance; the revilers governed their tongues and spoke well of their neighbours, and the cruel extortioners and oppressors learned to practise compassion and charity: These vilest of sinners, these children of hell, were made heirs of the kingdom of heaven, *being washed, being sanctified, being justified in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and by the Spirit of our God; 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, &c.

Had you all the refined science of Plato or Socrates, all the skill in morals that ever was attained by Zeno, Seneca or Epictetus; were you furnished with all the flowing oratory of Cicero, or the thunder of Demosthenes; were all these talents and excellencies united in one man, and you were the person so richly endowed, and could you employ them all in every sermon you preach, yet you could have no reasonable hope to convert and save one soul in Great Britain, where the gospel is published, while you lay aside the glorious gospel of Christ, and leave it entirely out of your discourses. Let me proceed yet further and say, had you the fullest acquaintance that ever man acquired with all the principles and duties of natural religion, both in its regard to God and to your fellow-creatures, had you the skill and tongue of an angel to range all these in their fairest order, to place them in their fullest light, and to pronounce and represent the whole law of God with such force and splendour to a British auditory, as was done to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, you might perhaps lay the consciences of men under deep conviction, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin:* But I am fully persuaded you would never reconcile one soul to God, you would never change the heart of one sinner, nor bring him into the favour of God, nor fit him for the joys of heaven, without this blessed gospel which is committed to your hands.

The great and glorious God is jealous of his own authority, and of the honour of his Son Jesus; nor will he condescend to bless any other methods for obtaining so divine an end, than what he himself has prescribed; nor will his Holy Spirit, whose office is *to glorify Christ*, stoop to concur with any other sort of means for the saving of sinners, where the name and offices of his Son, the only appointed Saviour, are known, and despised and neglected. It is the gospel alone that is *the power of God to salvation.* If the prophets will not *stand in his counsel*, nor cause the people *to hear his words*, they will never be able to turn Israel *from the iniquity of their ways, nor the evil of their doings*; Jer. xxiii. 22.

Perhaps it may be said in opposition to this advice, that the peculiar doctrines and discoveries of the gospel of Christ, were necessary to be published in a more large and particular manner, at the first institution of our religion, and to be insisted upon with greater frequency among the Jews, and especially among the gentiles, who before were unacquainted with the name, the history and the several offices of the blessed Jesus; but there is no such need of repeating them in christian countries, where people are trained up from their infancy to know *Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour of the world*: And therefore it is more needful in our land to preach upon the natural duties of piety towards God, of justice and truth and goodness toward our neighbour, and self-government and sobriety with regard to ourselves. And this may be done with good success among the people, upon the plain principles and motives which arise from the very nature of things, from the beauty and excellency of virtue, and its tendency to make all men happy, and the natural deformity of vice, and the mischiefs that attend it. But give me leave to answer this objection with these three or four enquiries:

First, Was it not the special design of these doctrines of Christ, when they were first

graciously communicated to the world, to reform the vices of mankind which reason could not reform, and to restore the world to piety and virtue, for which the powers of reason appeared so feeble and impotent? The nations of the earth had made long and fruitless essays, what the light of nature and philosophy would do, to bring wandering degenerate man back again to his Maker: Fruitless and long essays indeed, when after some thousands of years the world, who had forgotten their Maker and his laws, still run further from God, and plunged themselves into all abominable impieties and corrupt practices! Now if the all-wise God saw the gospel of Christ, to be so fit and happy an instrument, for the recovery of wretched man to religion and morality; if he furnished his apostles with these doctrines for this very purpose, and pronounced a blessing upon them as his own appointment, why should we not suppose, that this gospel is still as fit in its own nature for the same purposes as it was at first? And why may we not hope, the same heavenly blessing in a great measure to remain upon it, for these purposes, to the end of the world? While we introduce these divine topics, drawn from the gospel of Christ, to enforce piety and virtue upon the consciences of men, God forbid that we should abandon those arguments, drawn from the nature of things, and from human reason: The gospel does by no means exclude them, but clears and enlightens and advances them all, and gives them tenfold power for the purposes for which they are designed. The blessed apostles themselves sometimes made use of them; and they may be spread abroad in a rich variety by every preacher of the gospel to much better purpose, than a Seneca, or an Epictetus could display them. All kinds of efforts are necessary, and every sort of weapon may be used in its proper place, to make assaults upon the kingdom of Satan in the hearts of men; but it is evident, that the divine principles and motives of christianity were sent us down from heaven, as more sovereign remedies for the mortal diseases of the soul, and far more effectual for the reformation of mankind.

Secondly, If the beautiful ideas of virtue and religion, and the natural tendency of it to make men happy, be such sufficient motives to enforce the practice of it, I would enquire, why was not the gentile world reformed without the gospel? Why were the polite and knowing nations so abominably and almost universally sunk into shameful vices? Why did not the self-sufficient reward of virtue constrain greater numbers of mankind to change their manners, and to practise good morality? If this had been the best and most effectual way of changing the hearts and of reforming the profligate lives of men, why was not St. Paul sent only or chiefly with these principles and instructions of reason, to talk of the divine beauty of religion and excellency of virtue amongst them, and the advantages that it brought into human society and private life? What need was there that he should be commissioned to preach the doctrine of *the cross of Christ*, and the love of the Son of God descending from heaven to die for sinners? What makes him dwell so much upon the recovery of a sinful world to God, by the atonement and sufferings of the blessed Jesus, as a means and motive to persuade sinners to forsake their sins, and to be reconciled to God? Why are the evangelic topics so often insisted on, and represented in lively language, for the encouragement of virtue and piety, and as a guard against sin? What need had he of the history of a *crucified Son of God rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, interceding for sinners*, and governing the world, in order to reform mankind from vice and impiety? Why does the scripture tell us, that the hearts of men are to be *purified by faith, that believing on the Son of God* is the way *to get the victory over the world?* What need was there

that St. Paul should teach us, that our sins are to be mortified in us by the assistance of the Holy Spirit; or that St. Peter or St. John should tell us, that *we must be born again and made new creatures by the word of God*, and by this blessed Spirit and his influences? Were all these doctrines so needful in the primitive days, and attended with such illustrious and divine success, and are they grown useless and needless now?

Let me enquire, in the *third* place, Are all the hearers that make up our public assemblies so well acquainted with the doctrines of Christ and the gospel in our day, that they have no need to be taught them? Have they all enjoyed so happy an education from their infancy, as to understand the principles of the christian religion, and the peculiar articles of the faith, which are so necessary to restore sinners to a divine life? Do they so much as know that they *are by nature dead in trespasses and sins?* And do they know how to apply those vital truths to the blessed purposes of godliness? I am sure when we make particular enquiries, we find many of them ignorant enough both of themselves and their Saviour, and they *have need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God*, and the faith of Jesus.

Shall I enquire yet farther, Is this a day when we should leave the peculiar articles of the religion of Christ out of our ministrations, when the truth of them is boldly called in question, and denied by such multitudes who dwell among us? Is this a proper time for us to forget the name of Christ in our public labours, when the witty talents and reasonings of men join together, and labour hard to cast out his sacred name with contempt and scorn? Is it so seasonable a practice in this age, to neglect these evangelic themes, and to preach up virtue, without the special principles and motives with which Christ has furnished us, when there are such numbers amongst us who are fond of heathenism, who are endeavouring to introduce it again into a christian country, and to spread the poison of infidelity through a nation called by his name? If this be our practice, our hearers will begin to think indeed that infidels may have some reason on their side, and that the glorious doctrines of the gospel of Christ are not so necessary as our fathers thought them, while they find no mention of them in the pulpit, no use of them in our discourses from week to week, and from month to month, and yet we profess to preach for the salvation of souls. Will this be our glory to imitate the heathen philosophers, and to drop the gospel of the Son of God? To be complimented by unbelievers as men of superior sense, and as deep reasoners, while we abandon the faith of Jesus, and starve the souls of our hearers, by neglecting to distribute to them this *bread of life, which came down from heaven?* O let us who are his ministers remember the last words of our departing Lord, *Go, preach the gospel to every nation: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned; and lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the world;* Mark xvi. 15, 16. Matt. xxviii. 20. Let us fulfil the command, let us publish the threatening with the promise, and let us wait for the attendant blessing.

Wheresoever this gospel is published with clear and proper evidence, the belief of it is made necessary to salvation, and it is part of the commission of ministers to make known this to the people; nor is there any thing else which can stand in the room and stead of this gospel, or attain those happy purposes for which this holy institution was designed. Unless, therefore, you have such a high esteem for the gospel of Christ, and such a sense of its divine worth and power, as to take it along with you when you desire to save souls, you had better lay down the ministry and abandon your sacred profession;

for you will but *spend your strength for nought*, and waste your breath in vain declamations: You will neither *save your own soul, nor them that hear you;* and you will have a terrible account to give at the last day, what you have done with this gospel which was entrusted with you for the salvation of men: *You have hid this divine talent in the earth*, you have traded entirely with your own stock, *you have compassed yourself about with sparks of light of your own kindling, and you must lie down in sorrow with eternal loss.*

Forgive me, my dear brother and friend, and you, my beloved and honoured brethren in the ministry, forgive me, if I have indulged too much vehemence in this part of my discourse; if I have given too great a loose to pathetic language on this needful subject. I doubt not but your own consciences bear me witness, that this elevated voice is not the voice of reproof, but of friendly warning; and, I persuade myself, that you all join with me in this sentiment, that if ever we are so happy as to reform the lives of our hearers, to convert their hearts to God, and to train them up for heaven, it must be done by the principles of the gospel of Christ. On the occasion of such a head of advice, therefore, I assure myself you will forgive these warm emotions of spirit. Can there be any juster cause or season to exert fervour and zeal, than while we are pleading for the name, and honour, and kingdom of our adored Jesus? Let him live, let him reign for ever on his throne of glory; let him live upon our lips, and reign in all our ministrations: Let him live in the hearts of all our hearers; let him live and reign through Great Britain, and through all the nations, till iniquity be subdued, till the kingdom of Satan be destroyed, and the whole world are become willing subjects to the sceptre of his grace! Thus have I finished my third exhortation relating to the preparation of your sermons for the pulpit.

IV. In addressing your discourse to your hearers, remember to distinguish the different characters of saints and sinners, the converted and the unconverted, the sincere christian and the formal professor, the stupid and the awakened, the diligent and backsliding, the fearful or humble soul, and the obstinate and presumptuous; and in various seasons introduce a word for each of them. Thus you will *divide the word of God aright, and give to every one their portion;* 2 Tim. ii. 15. The general way of speaking to all persons in one view, and under one character, as though all your hearers were certainly true christians, and converted already, and wanted only a little farther reformation of heart and life, is too common in the world; but I think it is a dangerous way of preaching: It hath a powerful and unhappy tendency to lull unregenerate sinners asleep in security, to flatter and deceive them with dreams of happiness, and make their consciences easy without a real conversion of heart to God.

Let your hearers know that there is a vast and unspeakable difference betwixt a saint and a sinner, one in Christ, and one out of Christ; between one whose heart is in a state of corrupt nature or unrenewed, and one that is in a state of grace, and renewed to faith and holiness; between one who is only *born of the flesh, and is a child of wrath, and one who is born again, or born of the Spirit, and is become a child of God*, a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven. Let them know that this distinction is great and necessary; and it is not made (as some have imagined) by the water of baptism, but by the operations of the word and Spirit of God on the hearts of men, and by their diligent attendance on all the appointed means and methods of converting grace. It is a most real change, and of infinite importance, and however it has been derided by men, it is glorious in the eyes of God, and it will be made to appear so at the last day in the eyes of men and angels; but it will bring with it infinite terror to those, who thought themselves safe in a common

careless profession of christianity, without any inward and divine change of heart. That little treatise, written by the learned Mr. John Jennings, concerning the preaching of Christ and experimental preaching, has many valuable hints relating to these two last particulars of my exhortation.

V. Lead your hearers wisely into the knowledge of the truth, and teach them to build their faith upon solid grounds. Let them first know why they are christians, that they may be firmly established in the belief and profession of the religion of Christ; that they may be guarded against all the assaults of temptation and infidelity in this evil day, and may be able to *render a reason of the hope that is in them;* furnish them with arguments in opposition to the rude cavils and blasphemies which are frequently thrown out in the world against the name and doctrines of the holy Jesus.

Then let the great, the most important, and most necessary articles of our religion, be set before your hearers in their fairest light. Convey them into the understandings of those of meanest capacity, by condescending sometimes to plain and familiar methods of speech; prove these important doctrines and duties to them by all proper reasons and arguments; but as to the introducing of controversies into the pulpit, be not fond of it, nor frequent in it: In your common course of preaching avoid disputes, especially about things of less importance, without an apparent call of Providence. Religious controversies, frequently introduced without real necessity, have an unhappy tendency to hurt the spirit of true godliness, both in the hearts of preachers and hearers; 1 *Tim.* iv. 7. And have a care of laying too much stress on the peculiar notions, and terms, and phrases of the little sects and parties in christianity; take heed that you do not make your hearers bigots and uncharitable, while you endeavour to make them knowing christians. Establish them in all the chief and most important articles of the gospel of Christ, without endeavouring to render those who differ from you odious in the sight of your hearers. Whensoever you are constrained to declare your disapprobation of particular opinions, keep up and manifest your love to the persons of those who espouse them, and especially if they are persons of virtue and piety.

VI. Do not content yourself to compose a sermon of mere doctrinal truths and articles of belief, but into every sermon (if possible) bring something practical. It is true, knowledge is the foundation of practice; the head must be furnished with a degree of knowledge, or the heart cannot be good: But take heed that dry speculations and mere schemes of orthodoxy do not take up too large a part of your composures; and be sure to impress it frequently on your hearers, that holiness is the great end of all knowledge, and of much more value than the sublimest speculations; nor is there any doctrine but what requires some correspondent practice of piety or virtue. And among the practical parts of christianity, sometimes make it your business to insist on those subjects which are inward and spiritual, and which go by the name of experimental religion. Now and then take such themes as these, *viz.* the first awakenings of the conscience of a sinner by some special and awful providence, by some particular passages in the word of God, in pious writings or public sermons, the inward terrors of mind, and fears of the wrath of God, which sometimes accompany such awakenings; the temptations which arise to divert the mind from them, and to soothe up the sinner in the course of his iniquities; the inward conflicts of the spirit in these seasons, the methods of relief under such temptations, the arguments that may fix the heart and will for God, against all the enticements

and oppositions of the world; the labours of the conscience fluctuating between hope and fear; the rising and working of indwelling sin in the heart; the subtle excuses framed by the flesh for the indulgence of it; *the peace of God* derived from the gospel allaying the inward terrors of the soul under a sense of guilt; the victories obtained over strong corruptions and powerful temptations, by the faith of unseen things, by repeated addresses to God in prayer, by trusting in Jesus the great Mediator, *who is made of God to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*

While you are treating on these subjects, give me leave to put you again in mind, that it will sometimes have a very happy influence on the minds of hearers, to speak what you have learned from your own experience, though there is no need that you should tell them publicly it is your own: You may inform them what you borrowed from your own observation, and from the experience of christians, ancient or modern, who have passed through the same trials, who have wrestled with the same corruptions of nature, who have grappled with the same difficulties, and at last have been made conquerors over the same temptations. *As face answers face in the glass, so the heart of one man answers to another;* and the workings of the different principles of flesh and spirit, corrupt nature, and renewing grace, have a great deal of resemblance in the hearts of different persons who have passed through them. This sort of instruction, drawn from just and solid experience, will animate and encourage the young christian, that begins to shake off the slavery of sin, and to set his face towards heaven: This will make it appear, that religion is no impracticable thing; it will establish and comfort the professors of the gospel, and excite them with new vigour to proceed in the way of faith and holiness; it will raise a stedfast courage and hope, and will generally obtain a most happy effect upon the souls of the hearers, beyond all that you can say to them from principles of mere reasoning and dry speculation; and especially where you have the concurrent experience of any scriptural examples.

VII. Whether you are discoursing of doctrine or duty, take great care that you impose nothing on your hearers, either as a matter of faith or practice, but what your Lord and Master Christ Jesus has imposed. These are the limits of the commission which Christ gave to the first ministers of the gospel; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go disciple all nations, baptizing them* who are willing to become my disciples, and *teach them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you.* He has not given leave to his ministers, whether separate in their single congregations, or united in synods or councils, the least degree of power to appoint one new article of faith, nor to enjoin any new sort of devotion or practice, nor to impose any one right or ceremony of worship but what he himself has framed and enjoined. And yet, to our universal reproach, there is scarce any party of christians but hath been too ready to impose some doctrines upon the belief of their proselytes which Christ has not imposed, or to require of them some practices or some abstinences about meats or days, or things indifferent, which Christ has not required. It is this assuming power that has turned christianity into a hundred shapes, and every one of them in some degree unlike the glorious gospel. It is this has brought in all the superstitions and fooleries, the splendid vanities, the useless austerities, and the childish trifles of the Greek and Roman churches; and it is this has too far corrupted the purity, and defaced the beauty of most of those churches who boast of reformation, and wear the protestant name.

Now to discourage and deter us all from such presumption, let us remember that this

imposing spirit has generally found it necessary to support its commands with penalties and persecutions. Hence proceed the imprisonments and the murders, the cruelties, the tortures, and the wild and bloody fury that has ravaged the nations of Christendom, and cast a foul and lasting blot and infamy upon the religion of the blessed Jesus. Blessed Jesus! when shall this stain be washed out from thy religion, and this scandal die? If we survey the persecuting laws and edicts that have been framed and executed in Great Britain, or in foreign nations, in ancient or later times, we shall seldom find that the plain and explicit doctrines and duties of the gospel have been guarded with these terrors; but it is the wretched inventions of men, it is the institutions of priests, or the appointments of kings, (all which have been mere additions to the word of God) that have had the honour, shall I say, or the infamy to be thus guarded with bloody severities, and with engines of death. It is the absolute determination of men upon some points which Christ has not plainly determined; it is some forms of pretended orthodoxy which scripture knows nothing of, or at least which the word of God has not made necessary to our faith; it is some ceremonies or modes of worship which Christ and his apostles never commanded, that have generally been the shameful occasion of excommunications and prisons, of banishments and martyrdoms. See to it therefore with a holy and religious care, when you dictate any thing to your hearers as necessary to be believed or practised, that you have the plain and evident direction of scripture to support you in it.

It is this corrupt mixture of human opinions, and human forms of divine service, that has so disguised the pure religion of the gospel, as to tempt the deist to renounce it entirely. The pure religion of Jesus has divine charms in it, and is, like the author, *altogether lovely;* but when on one hand it is corrupted and debased, by new doctrines foisted into our creeds, and new mysteries which men have invented to overload our faith; when it is incumbered by new rituals of worship, or imposed rules and practices on the other hand, which the holy scripture has not enjoined; when men make articles of faith, which are no where plainly revealed; when they pronounce that to be a sin which God hath no where forbidden, and appoint that to be a duty which God hath never commanded, (which I take to be the very nature of superstition) it casts such a veil of deformity over the beauties of the gospel, that it is no wonder if the men of reason start at it, and pronounce against it. While we hold forth this confused mass and mixture of things divine and human, and call it the religion of Christ, we tempt the men of infidelity to establish themselves in their unbelief; and they will hardly now give a favourable hearing to the pure doctrine of the gospel, because they have been so much disgusted with the sight of it, in a corrupt and superstitious dress.

But in this state of frailty and imperfection, dangers attend us on either hand. As we must take heed that we do not add the fancies of men to our divine religion, so we should take equal care that we do not curtail the appointments of Christ. With a sacred vigilance and zeal, we should maintain the plain, express, and necessary articles, that we find evidently written in the word of God, and suffer none of them to be lost through our default. The world has been so long imposed upon by these shameful additions of men to the gospel of Christ, that they seem now to be resolved to bear them no longer. But they are unhappily running into another extreme; because several sects and parties of christians have tacked on so many false and unbecoming ornaments to christianity, they resolve to deliver her from these disguises; but while they are paring off all this foreign trumpery, they too often cut her to the quick, and sometimes let out her life-blood, (if I may so express it)

and maim her of her very limbs and vital parts. Because so many irrational notions and follies have been mixed up with the christian scheme, it is now a modish humour of the age to renounce almost every thing that reason doth not discover, and to reduce christianity itself to little more than the light of nature and the dictates of reason. And under this sort of influence, there are some who are believers of the Bible and the divine mission of Christ, and dare not renounce the gospel itself; yet they interpret some of the peculiar and express doctrines of it into so poor, so narrow, and so jejune a meaning, that they suffer but little to remain beyond the articles of natural religion. This leads some of the learned and polite men of the age to explain away the sacrifice and the atonement made for our sins by the death of Christ, and to bereave our religion of the ordinary aids of the Holy Spirit, both which are so plainly and expressly revealed, and so frequently repeated in the New Testament, and which are two of the chief glories of the blessed gospel, and which perhaps are two of the chief uses of those sacred names *of the Son and the Holy Spirit*, into which we are baptized. It is this very humour that persuades some persons to reduce the injury and mischief that we have sustained by the sin and fall of Adam, to so slight a bruise and so inconsiderable a wound, that a small matter of grace is needful for our recovery; and accordingly they impoverish the rich and admirable remedy of the gospel to a very culpable degree, supposing no more to be necessary for the restoration of man, than those few ingredients, which, in their opinion, make up the whole composition. Hence it comes to pass, that the doctrine of regeneration, or an entire change of corrupt nature by a principle of divine grace, is almost lost out of their christianity; or at least they suppose renewing grace and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and his assistances, to carry nothing more in them than the outward divine messages and discoveries of grace, made and attested by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit to the christian world. This is a dangerous extreme on the other hand; I hope it will never obtain amongst us protestant dissenters; but since it is a fashionable error, you ought to set a stricter guard against it. As *he that adds or takes away from the words of the prophecy in the latter end of the book of God, is left under a curse;* Rev. xxii. 18, 19. so we should set a holy guard upon ourselves, lest we add any thing to the gospel of Christ; or take any thing from it, lest we expose ourselves to the same divine indignation.

To avoid both these extremes, permit me to give this general word of advice, and may God enable me to take it myself, *viz.* That in all our ministrations we keep a constant and religious eye upon the holy scripture, that in the necessary and most important points of doctrine or duty, we may teach our hearers neither more nor less than the scripture teaches. Our great business is to expound scripture, and enforce the word of God upon the minds and hearts of men: When therefore we explain the great and necessary points of the gospel contained in any one scripture, let us do it as much as possible by bringing other parts of scripture into the same view, that the word of God may be a comment on itself. When we have occasion to make inferences from it, let us take care that the connection of them be strong and evident, and that they lie not far off at a distance, for in very distant inferences we are more liable to mistake. When we are delivering our own best opinions concerning divine subjects, and giving our advice upon matters which are not so evidently and so expressly revealed, let us practise the modesty of the blessed apostle, 1 *Cor.* vii. 6, 10, 12, 25, &c. *I speak this by permission or advice, and*

not of commandment: It is I speak it, and not the Lord: I have no plain commandment of the Lord about it, yet I give my judgment as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful: I suppose, therefore, that in the present case, this is good to be practised, or that to be avoided: Judge ye within yourselves, whether what I speak be agreeable to the word of God;* 1 Cor. xi. 13.

VIII. Remember that you have to do with the understanding, reason, and memory of man, with the heart and conscience, with the will and affections; and therefore you must use every method of speech which may be most proper to engage and employ each of these faculties, or powers of human nature, on the side of religion, and in the interests of God and the gospel. Your first business is with the understanding, to make even the lower parts of your auditory know what you mean. Endeavour, therefore, to find out all the clearest and most easy forms of speech, to convey divine truths into the minds of men. Seek to obtain a perspicuous style, and a clear and distinct manner of speaking, that you may effectually impress the understanding, while you pronounce the words; that you may so exactly imprint on the mind of the hearers the same ideas which you yourself have conceived, that they may never mistake your meaning. This talent is sooner attained in younger years, by having some judicious friend to hear or read over your discourses, and inform you where perspicuity is wanting in your language, and where the hearers may be in danger of mistaking your sense. For want of this, some young preachers have fixed themselves in such an obscure way of writing and talking, as hath very much prevented their hearers from obtaining distinct ideas of their discourse. And if a man gets such an unhappy habit, he will be sometimes talking to the air, and make the people stare at him, as though he were speaking some unknown language.

Remember you have to do with the reasoning powers of man, in preaching the gospel of Christ; for though this gospel be revealed from heaven, and could never be discovered by all the efforts of human reason, yet it is the reason of man must judge of several things relating to it, *viz.* It is reason must determine whether the evidence of its heavenly original be clear and strong: It is reason must judge whether such a doctrine or such a duty be contained in this gospel, or may be justly deduced from it: It is the work of human reason to compare one scripture with another, and to find out the true sense of any particular text by this means: And it is reason also must give its sentence, whether a doctrine, which is pretended to be contained in scripture, be contrary to the eternal and unchangeable relations and reasons of things; and if so, then reason may pronounce that this doctrine is not from God, nor can be given us by divine revelation. Reason, therefore, hath its office and proper province, even in matters of revelation; yet it must always be confessed, that some propositions may be revealed to us from heaven, which may be so far superior to the limits and sphere of our reasoning powers in this present state, that human reason ought not to reject them, because it cannot fully understand them, nor clearly and perfectly reconcile them, unless it plainly see a natural absurdity in them, a real impossibility, or a plain inconsistence with other parts of divine revelation.

* I know these expressions of the apostle have another turn given them by some judicious commentators, *viz.* that the apostle had sufficient proof of the directions which he pronounces strongly to be the commands of Christ from other places of scripture; but that these which he expresses so cautiously, were directions which Christ had not elsewhere given us, but were made known to him by his own special inspiration. I am not fully assured which is the true sense, but I rather think it is to be understood, as St. Paul's own private sense of things, who was a man favoured with many inspirations.

Well then, since you have to do with reasonable creatures in your sacred work, let your manner of speaking be rational, and your arguments and inferences just and strong, that you may effectually convince your hearers of the truth of what you deliver, in your ministrations of the gospel. And in your representation of things to the reason and understanding of men, it would sometimes be of special advantage to have some power over the fancy or imagination: This would help us to paint our themes in their proper colours, whether of the alluring or the forbidden kind. And now and then we should make use of both, in order to impress the idea on the soul with happier force and success.

When you would describe any of the personal or social virtues of life, so as to enforce their practice, set yourself to display the beauties and excellencies of them, in their own agreeable and lovely forms and colours. But do not content yourself with this alone: This is not sufficient to allure the degenerate and sensual mind of man to practise them. Few persons are of so happy a disposition, and so refined a genius, as to be wrought upon by the mere aspect of such inviting qualities. Endeavour, therefore, to illustrate the virtues by their contrary vices, and set forth these moral mischiefs both in their deformities and their dangerous consequences, before the eyes of your hearers. Think it not enough to represent to them the shining excellencies of humility and benevolence, of justice, veracity, gratitude, and temperance; but produce to sight the vile features of pride, envy, malice, spite, knavery, falsehood, revenge, sensuality, luxury, and the rest of that cursed train, in their proper places and seasons. Make it evident, how contrary they are both to the law of God and the gospel of Christ; describe them in all their several forms, shapes, and appearances; strip them of their false pretences and disgüises; shew how they insinuate and exert themselves in different occurrences of life, and different constitutions; and pursue them so narrowly, as it were, with a hue and cry, with such exact descriptions, that if any of these vices are indulged by your hearers, they may be found out by strict self-examination, that the consciences of the guilty may be laid under conviction of sin, and be set in the way of repentance and reformation.

Whensoever any vice has found the way into our bosoms, and make its nest there, its proper and evil features and characters had need to be marked out by the preacher with great accuracy, that it may be discovered to our consciences in order to its destruction; for these wretched hearts of ours are naturally so fond of all their own inmates, that they are too ready to hide their ill qualities from our own sight and conviction, and thus they cover and save them from the sentence of mortification and death, which is denounced against every sin in the word of God. And let the preacher and the hearer both remember, that sin must be pursued to the death, or else there is no life to the soul. It is only the christian who *by the spirit mortifies the sinful deeds of the body, has the promise of salvation and life;* Rom. viii. 13. It would be a happy thing, if this vivacious and sprightly power of the fancy, which too often becomes an ingenious and successful tempter of the soul to guilt, mischief and ruin, might, by the art of the preacher, be gained over to the interests of virtue and goodness, and employed for God and salvation.

Think farther, that you should take some care also to engage the memory, and to make it serve the purposes of religion. Let your reasonings be never so forcible and convincing, let your language be never so clear and intelligible, yet if the whole discourse glide over the ears in a smooth and delightful stream, and if nothing be fixed in the memory, the sermon is in great danger of being lost and fruitless. Now to avoid this danger, I would recommend to you the care of a clear and distinct method, and let this method appear to

the hearers, by the division of your discourses into several plain and distinct particulars, so that the whole may not be a mere loose harangue, without evident members and discernable rests and pauses. Whatsoever proper and natural divisions belong to your subject, mark them out by the numbers 1st, 2d, 3d, &c. This will afford you time to breathe, in the delivery of your discourse, and give your hearers a short season for recollection of the particulars which have been mentioned before.

But in this matter take care always to maintain a happy medium, so as never to arise to such a number of particulars as may make your sermon look like a tree full of branches in the winter, without the beautiful and profitable appearance of leaves and fruit. Cast the scheme of your discourse into some distinct general heads, and lesser subdivisions in your first sketches and rudiments of it: This will greatly assist you in the amplification; this will help you to preserve a just method throughout, and secure you from repeating the same thoughts too often: This will enable you to commit your sermon to your own memory the better, that you may deliver it with ease, and it will greatly assist the understanding as well as the memory of all that hear you. It will furnish them with matter and method for an easy recollection at home, for meditation in their devout retirement, and for religious conference or rehearsal after the public worship is ended.

Consider again, your business is with the consciences, and wills, and affections of men. A mere conviction of the reason and judgment, by the strongest arguments, is hardly sufficient, in matter of piety and virtue, to command the will into obedience; because the appetites of the flesh and the interests of this world are engaged on the opposite side. It is a very common case with the sons and daughters of Adam, to see and know their proper duty, and to have the reasons that enforce it fresh in their memory; and yet the powerful efforts of *the flesh and the world* withhold the will from the practice, forbid its holy resolutions for God and heaven, or keep them always feeble, doubtful and wavering. The God of nature, therefore, has furnished mankind with those powers which we call passions, or affections of the heart, in order to excite the will with superior vigour and activity to avoid the evil and pursue the good. Upon this account, the preacher must learn to address the passions in a proper manner, and I cannot but think it a very imperfect character of a christian preacher, that he reasons well upon every subject, and talks clearly upon his text, if he has nothing of the pathetic in his ministrations, no talent at all to strike the passions of the heart.

Awaken your spirit, therefore, in your composures, contrive all lively, forcible, and penetrating forms of speech, to make your words powerful and impressive on the hearts of your hearers, when light is first let into the mind. Practise all the awful and solemn ways of address to the conscience, all the soft and tender influences on the heart. Try all methods to rouse and awaken the cold, the stupid, the sleepy race of sinners; learn all the language of holy jealousy and terror, to affright the presumptuous; all the compassionate and encouraging manners of speaking, to comfort, encourage, and direct the awakened, the penitent, the willing and the humble; all the winning and engaging modes of discourse and expostulation, to constrain the hearers of every character to attend. Seek this happy skill of reigning and triumphing over the hearts of an assembly; persuade them with power to love and practise all the important duties of godliness, in opposition to the flesh and the world; endeavour to kindle the soul to zeal in the holy warfare, and to make it bravely victorious over all the enemies of its salvation. But in all these

efforts of sacred oratory, remember still you are a minister of the gospel of Christ; and as your style must not affect the pomp and magnificence of the theatre, so neither should you borrow your expressions or your metaphors from the coarest occupations, or any of the mean and uncleanly occurrences in life. Swell not the sound of your periods with ambitious or pedantic phrases; dress not your serious discourses to the people in too glittering array, with an affectation of gaudy and flaunting ornaments, nor ever descend to so low a degree of familiarity and meanness, as to sink your language below the dignity of your subject or your office.

IX. As the art of reasoning, and the happy skill of persuasion, are both necessary to be used in framing your discourses, so both of them may be borrowed in a good measure from the holy scriptures. The word of God will furnish you with a rich variety of forms both to prove and persuade. Clear instruction, convincing argument, and pathetic address to the heart, may be all drawn from the sacred writers. Many fine strokes of true logic and rhetoric are scattered through that divine book, the Bible: Words of force and elegance to charm and allure the soul, glitter and sparkle like golden ore in some peculiar parts of it. You may find there noble examples of the awful and compassionate style, and inimitable patterns of the terrible and the tender. Shall I therefore take the freedom once again to call upon you to remember, that you are a minister of the word of God, a professor and preacher of the Bible, and not a mere philosopher upon the foot of reason, nor an orator in a heathen school? I am not here directing you to compose your whole sermons of nothing else but a perpetual connection of texts of scripture; nor to spend the whole hour in running from one text to another, as a concordance, or the margin shall point them out. Persons of low degrees of learning, who give themselves up to this method, have frequently introduced scripture in their discourses, in a sense which the holy writers never thought of, and which the Spirit of God never designed; and yet if a learned man would happily explain the more difficult parts of the word of God, perhaps it would be generally best done, and especially in the pulpit, by comparing them with other texts which are more plain and easy. Scripture is the best interpreter of itself.

As for argument to confirm a doctrine or enforce a duty, you may borrow much of this from the word of God. It is true, when we speak of those subjects which belong to natural religion, we may very properly bring arguments from the nature of God and man, and from the reason of things, to shew how necessary and reasonable it is to believe such a truth, or to practise such a virtue; nor is the scripture itself barren of such reasonings, and even in the peculiar articles of christianity, it is a most excellent and useful design, now and then, to shew how consistent and harmonious they are with reason, and how worthy of our faith and practice, since the word of God has revealed them, though they could not be found out by the light of nature. Yet these arguments, if they are long and laboured, and not immediately apprehended by the mind, are much more proper to be communicated to the world by writing than by speaking; there the reader may review and dwell upon an argument till he has grasped the whole chain, and admits all the connected inferences, and sees the undoubted evidence of the conclusion: But reasonings in the pulpit, for the most part, should be short and easy, that they may strike conviction into the mind almost as soon as they strike the ear, unless your hearers were all men of learning and refined education.

But the bulk of our auditors, whether in the city or country, are not much profited by sermons merely made up of rational proofs of any doctrine or duty, deeply and

laboriously deduced from the original springs and prime nature of things. They do not find their minds so much enlightened, nor their hearts warmed by a tedious train of connected inferences that are fetched from distant principles of nature and philosophy. This method, I confess, may entertain a few of the more rational, the more learned, or more polite persons in an auditory, who can survey and comprehend the sense of such discourses, and feel the force of such long chains of argumentation; and these persons, I own, ought to have due respect paid them in some parts of our ministry. Yet it is not the great business of a preacher of the gospel only to please the few, but *to become all things to all men*, and, if possible, to win a multitude of souls to Christ. The generality of our hearers have their lives filled up with the business of their station, and have little leisure or advantage to improve their understandings in the art of deep reasoning. These will yawn and nod, and grow weary of the sermon; nor will such a preacher (though his discourses are never so much laboured) profit the assembly, any more than please them, if he goes on resolutely in this way: Such a minister will quickly despise his hearers, and they will soon be tired with their preacher; and if some providence does not remove him to another congregation, or if he does not betake himself to some other business of life, he will be tempted to forsake the protestant dissenters, and throw himself into the established church, when he has persuaded his conscience to comply with the imposed terms of ministerial conformity.

I grant it is necessary to use good reason through your whole discourse, and connect all the parts of it with justice: But, as I hinted before, let your arguments to prove any point be generally short and easy, and within the grasp of a common understanding: Remember that a few plain and obvious reasonings, from familiar and well-known principles, and some clear and well-chosen texts of scripture, with a word or two to explain or apply them to the understanding and conscience of men with light and zeal, will impress the judgment and pierce the heart with more speedy and powerful conviction; and our hearers, who regard a plain scriptural argument as *the word of the living God*, will much more readily receive it, and submit much sooner to the force and authority of it. *Thus saith the prophet*, or *thus saith the apostle*, carries greater weight with it, both to convince and to persuade, than a long series of demonstrations from remote principles, though they should be firm and strong as those of Euclid or Sir Isaac Newton.

And as for bright, warm, and pathetic language, to strike the imagination or to affect the heart, to kindle the divine passions or to melt the soul, there is none of the heathen orators can better furnish you than the moving expostulations of the ancient prophets, the tender and sprightly odes of holy David, or the affectionate part of the letters of St. Paul, which even his enemies in the church of Corinth confess to be powerful. The eastern writers, among whom we number the Jews, were particularly famous for lively oratory, for bright images, and bold and animated figures of speech. Could I have heard Isaiah or Jeremy pronouncing some of their sermons, or attended St. Paul in some of his pathetic strains of preaching, I should never mourn a want of acquaintance with Tully or Demosthenes.

A preacher whose mind is well stored and enriched with the divine sense and sentiments, the reasoning and the language of scripture, (and especially if these are wrought into his heart by christian experience) supposing his other talents are equal to those of his brethren, will always have a considerable advantage over them in composing such

discourses as shall be most popular and most useful in christian assemblies; and he may better expect the presence and blessing of God, to make his word triumph over the souls of men, and will generally speak to their hearts with more power for their eternal salvation. Shew me one sinner turned to God and holiness by the labours of a christian preacher, who is generally entertaining the audience with a long and weighty chain of reasoning from the principles of nature, and teaching virtue in the language of heathen philosophy: And I think I may undertake to shew you ten who have been convinced and converted, and have become holy persons and lively christians by an attendance upon a scriptural, affectionate, and experimental ministry: The whole assembly hang attentive upon the lips of a man who speaks to the heart as well as the understanding, and who can enforce his exhortations from a manifold experience of the success of them. They delight to hear the preacher whose plain and powerful addresses to the conscience, and whose frequent methods of reasoning in the pulpit, have been drawn from what they themselves have read in scripture concerning God and man, sin and duty, our misery and divine mercy, death, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell. They attend with holy reverence and affection on such a minister, whose frequent argument both in points of doctrine and practice is, *Thus saith the Lord.*

X. *Be not slothful* or negligent in your weekly preparation for the pulpit: Take due time for it: Begin so early in the week, that you may have time enough before you to finish your preparations well; and always allow for accidental occurrences, either from indisposition of body, from interruptions by company, from unforeseen business or trouble, &c. that you may not be reduced to the necessity of hurrying over your work in haste at the end of the week, and serving God and the souls of men with poor, cold, and careless performances. Remember that awful word, though spoken on another occasion, Jer. xlviii. 10. *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* Manage so as to leave generally the Saturday evening, or at least the Lord's-day morning, entire for the review and correction of your discourse, and for your own spiritual improvement by the sermon which you have prepared for the people.

If it should happen that the mere providence of God, without any neglect of yours, has hindered you from making so good a preparation as you designed, you may with courage, and hope of divine assistance, venture into the assembly with more slender and imperfect furniture: But if your conscience tells you that your preparations are very slight, and the neglect is all your own, you have less reason to expect aids from above without great humiliation for your negligence. And what if God should forsake you so far in the pulpit, as to expose you to public shame, and thus punish you for your carelessness in the midst of the congregation?

Study your matter well by meditation and reading, and comparing scriptures together, till you have gotten it completely within your grasp and survey: Then if you should happen to be so situated in preaching, that you could not refresh your memory by the inspection of your paper every minute, yet you will not be exposed to hurry and confusion; a ready thought will suggest something pertinent to your purpose. Let your preparations be usually so perfect, that you may be able to fill up the time allotted for the discourse with solid sense and proper language, even if your natural spirits should happen to be heavy and indisposed at the hour of preaching, and if your mind should have no new thoughts arising in the delivery of your discourse. Labour carefully in the formation of your sermons in younger years: A habit of thinking and speaking well, procured

by the studies of youth, will make the labour of your middle age easy, when perhaps you will have much less time and leisure. This shall suffice for the second general head, which exhorts you to take heed to your private studies, both those which may furnish you for the work of the ministry in general, and those which are necessary to your particular preparations for the pulpit.

SECTION III.

OF PUBLIC MINISTRATIONS.

We proceed now to the third general head, and that is, Take heed to your public labours and ministrations in the church, which may be done by attending to the following particulars:

I. Apply yourself to your work with pious delight; not as a toil and task, which you wish were done and ended, but as matter of inward pleasure to your own soul: Enter the pulpit with the solemnity of holy joy, that you have an opportunity to speak for the honour of God, and the salvation of men. Then you will not preach or pray with sloth or laziness, with coldness or indifference: We do not use to be slothful and indifferent in the pursuit of our joys, or the relish of our chosen pleasures. Stir up yourself to the work with sacred vigour, that the assembly may feel what you speak. But if you deliver the most solemn and lively composures like a man that is half asleep, it will be no wonder if your hearers slumber. A dull preacher makes a drowsy church.

II. Endeavour to get your heart into a temper of divine love, zealous for the laws of God, affected with the grace of Christ, and compassionate for the souls of men. With this temper engage in public work. Let your frame of spirit be holy with regard to your own inward devotion, near to God, and delighting in him; and let it be zealous for the name of Christ, and the increase of his kingdom. O pity perishing sinners when you are sent to invite them to be reconciled to God. Let not self be the subject or the end of your preaching, but Christ and the salvation of souls. *We preach not ourselves,* saith the apostle, *but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake;* 2 Cor. iv. 5. Speak as a dying preacher to dying hearers, with the utmost *compassion to the ignorant,* the tempted, the foolish, and the obstinate; for all these are in danger of eternal death. Attend your work with the utmost desire to save souls from hell, and enlarge the kingdom of Christ your Lord. Go into the public assembly with a design (if God please) to strike and persuade some souls there into repentance, faith, holiness and salvation. Go to *open blind eyes, to unstop deaf ears, to make the lame walk,* to make the foolish wise, *to raise those that are dead in trespasses and sins* to a heavenly and divine life, and to bring guilty rebels to return to the love and obedience of their Maker, by Jesus Christ, the great Reconciler, that they may be pardoned and saved. Go to diffuse the savour of the name of Christ and his gospel through a whole assembly, and to allure souls to partake of his grace and glory.

III. Go forth in *the strength of Christ,* for these glorious effects are above your own strength, and transcend all the powers of the brightest preachers. *Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus;* 2 Tim. ii. 1. *Without him we can do nothing;* John xv. 5. Go with a design to work wonders of salvation on sinful creatures, but in the strength of Jesus, *who hath all power given him in heaven and earth, and hath promised to be with his ministers to the end of the world;* Matt. xxviii. 20. Pray earnestly for the promised aids

of the Spirit, and plead with God who hath sent you forth in the service of the gospel of his Son, that you may not return empty, but bring in fair harvest of converts to heaven. It is *the Lord of the harvest* who only can give this divine success to the labourers. *He that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but all our hope is in God, who giveth the increase;* 1 Cor. iii. 7.

IV. Get the substance of your sermon, which you have prepared for the pulpit, so wrought into your head and heart by review and meditation, that you may have it at command, and speak to your hearers with freedom; not as if you were reading or repeating your lesson to them, but as a man sent to teach and persuade them to faith and holiness. Deliver your discourses to the people like a man that is talking to them in good earnest about their most important concerns, and their everlasting welfare; like a messenger sent from heaven who would fain save sinners from hell, and allure souls to God and happiness. Do not indulge that lazy way of reading over your prepared paper, as a schoolboy does an oration out of Livy or Cicero, who has no concern in the things he speaks. But let all the warmest zeal for God, and compassion for perishing men, animate your voice and countenance; and let the people see and feel, as well as hear, that you are speaking to them about things of infinite moment, and in which your own eternal interest lies as well as theirs.

V. If you pray and hope for the assistance of the Spirit of God in every part of your work, do not resolve always to confine yourself precisely to the mere words and sentences which you have written down in your private preparations. Far be it from me to encourage a preacher to venture into public work without due preparation by study, and a regular composure of his discourse. We must not *serve God with what cost us nothing.* All our wisest thoughts and cares are due to the sacred service of the temple: But what I mean is, that we should not impose upon ourselves just such a number of pre-composed words and lines to be delivered in the hour, without daring to speak a warm sentiment that comes fresh upon the mind. Why may you not hope for some lively turns of thought, some new pious sentiments which may strike light, and heat, and life into the understandings and the hearts of those that hear you? In the zeal of your ministrations, why may you not expect some bright, and warm, and pathetic forms of argument and persuasion, to offer themselves to your lips, for the more powerful conviction of sinners, and the encouragement and comfort of humble christians? Have you not often found such an enlargement of thought, such a variety of sentiment and freedom of speech, in common conversation upon an important subject, beyond what you were apprized of beforehand? And why should you forbid yourself this natural advantage in the pulpit, and in the fervour of sacred ministrations, where also you have more reason to hope for divine assistance?

Besides, for us who are protestant dissenters, and confine ourselves to no set forms in prayer, it seems more unreasonable to confine our lips constantly and precisely to the words written in our papers in the work of preaching. Do we plead so earnestly for the liberty of prayer, and yet never give our spirits a liberty to express their present warm, lively, and affectionate thoughts, in ministering the gospel of Christ under the hopes of his assistance? Why must we never dare to add any thing to our premeditated notes in speaking to the people, while we take this freedom in speaking to the blessed God? As there has been many a fervent and devout petition offered to God in our addresses to him which has not been thought of before, so many a sentence that was never written has

been delivered in our addresses to the people with glorious success; it has come more immediate and warm from the heart, and may have been blessed of God to save a soul.

VI. Here would be a proper place to interpose a few directions concerning elocution, and the whole manner of delivery of your discourse to the people; which includes both a voice, gesture, and behaviour suited to the subject and design of every part of the sermon. But the rules that are necessary for this part of our work are much better derived from books written on this subject, from an observation of the best preachers, in order to imitate them, and an avoidance of that which we find offensive when we ourselves are hearers. Besides, as I have had an opportunity sometimes, my dear brother, of attending your performances in public, I think I may be bold to say, that in this, as well as in several other parts of your ministration, you stand in no need of any advice I can give. But since you have called me at present to this service, I have endeavoured to fulfil it. If I had a design to go through the whole of the ministerial office, I should here also find a proper place to speak of the manner of your performance of public prayer, of your direction of the person who leads that part of worship which is called psalmody, and in your ministration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper; but this would require much more time, and my chief design was to put you in mind of a few useful things which relate to preaching. I proceed, therefore, to the last particular.

VII. Be very solicitous about the success of all your labours in the pulpit. Water the seed sown not only with public but secret prayer. Plead with God importunately, that he would not suffer you to labour in vain. Be not like that foolish bird *the Ostrich, which lays her eggs in the dust, and leaves them there, regardless whether they come to life or not: God hath not given her understanding;* Job xxxix. 14—17. But let not this folly be your character or practice: Labour, and watch, and pray, that your sermons and the fruit of your studies may become words of divine life to souls.

It is an observation of pious Mr. Baxter's which I have read somewhere in his works, that he has never known any considerable success from the brightest and noblest talents, nor the most excellent kind of preaching; and that even where the preachers themselves have been truly religious, if they have not had a solicitous concern for the success of their ministrations. Let the awful and important thoughts of souls being saved by my preaching, or left to perish and be condemned to hell by my negligence, I say, let this awful and tremendous thought dwell ever upon your spirit. We are made *watchmen to the house of Israel, as Ezekiel was;* Ezek. iii. 17, &c. *and if we give no warning* of approaching danger, *the souls* of multitudes may perish through our neglect, *but the blood of souls will* be terribly *required at our hands.*

SECTION IV.

OF THE CONVERSATION OF A MINISTER.

We are come now to the fourth and last thing which I proposed, in order to the fulfilling of your ministry, *viz.* Take heed to your whole conversation in the world; let that be managed not only as becomes a professor of christianity, but as becomes a minister of the gospel of Christ. Now amongst other rules which may render your conversation agreeable to your character, I entreat you to take these few into your thoughts:

I. Let it be blameless and inoffensive. *Be vigilant, be temperate in all things, not only as a soldier of Christ*, but as an under-leader of part of his army. *Be temperate*, and abstain sometimes even from lawful delights, that you may make the work of self-denial easy, and that you may *bear hardship as becomes a soldier;* 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. *Be watchful* or vigilant, lest you be too much entangled with the affairs of this life, *that you may better please him who has chosen you* for an officer in his battalions, and that you may not be easily surprised into the snares of sin. Guard against a love of pleasure, a sensual temper, an indulgence of appetite, an excessive relish of wine or dainties; this carnalizes the soul, and gives occasion to the world to reproach us but too justly.

Watch carefully in all your conduct *that you give no offence*, as far as possible, *neither to Jew or gentile, nor to the church of God, that so the ministry may not be blamed;* 1 Cor. x. 32. 2 Cor. vi. 3. Maintain a holy jealousy over yourself and your conduct, *that the name of Christ and his gospel* suffer not the reproach of tongues and impious blasphemies through your means. Oh how dreadful is the mischief that a scandalous minister does to the gospel of our blessed Lord! What a fearful train of consequences may attend his indulgence of any sinful appetite, or any single criminal action, even though it be not repeated! What a fatal stumbling-block does he lay before the feet of saints and sinners! He turns away the heart of sinners from God and religion, who perhaps began to think of setting their faces towards heaven: He discourages the hearts of young christians, and weakens the hands of all the friends of Christ. *Woe be to the preacher by whom such offences come.*

II. Let your conversation be exemplary in all the duties of holiness and virtue, in all the instances of worship and piety toward God, and in those of justice, honour, and hearty benevolence towards men. Be forward and ready to engage in every good word and work, that you may be a pattern and a leader of the flock, that you may be able to address the people committed to your care in the language of the blessed apostle, *Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ;* 1 Cor. xi. 1. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.—For our conversation is in heaven;* Phil. iii. 17, 20. *Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do you practise, and the God of peace shall be with you;* Phil. iv. 9.

III. Let your conversation be grave and manly, yet pleasant and engaging. Let it be grave, manly, and venerable: Remember your station in the church, that you sink not into levity and vain trifling, that you indulge not any ridiculous humours or childish follies below the dignity of your character: Keep up the honour of your office among men by a remarkable sanctity of manners, by a decent and manly deportment. Remember that our station does not permit any of us to set up for a buffoon; nor will it be any glory to us to excel in farce and comedy. Let others obtain the honour of being good jesters, and of having it in their power to spread a laugh round the company when they please: But let it be our ambition to act on the stage of life as men who are devoted to the service of the God of heaven, to the real benefit of mankind on earth, and to their eternal interests.

Yet there is no need that your behaviour should have any thing stiff or haughty, any thing sullen or gloomy in it: There is an art of pleasing in conversation that will maintain the honour of a superior office without a morose silence, without an affected stiffness, and without a haughty superiority. A pleasant story may proceed without offence from a minister's lips; but he should never aim at the title of a man of mirth, nor abound in

such tales as carry no useful instruction in them, no lessons of piety, or wisdom, or virtue. Let a cheerful freedom, a generous friendship, and an innocent pleasure, generally appear on your countenance; and let your speech be ever kind and affectionate. Do not put on any forbidding airs, nor let the humblest soul be afraid to speak to you. Let your whole carriage be civil and affable; let your address to men be usually open and free, such as may allure persons to be open and free with you in the important concerns of their souls. Seek as far as possible to obtain all your pious designs, by soft and gentle methods of persuasion.

If you are ever called to the unpleasing and painful work of reproof, this may be done effectually upon some occasions without speaking a word. When vicious, or uncleanly, or unbecoming speeches arise in public conversation, a sudden silence, with an assumed gravity, will often be a sensible and sufficient reproof. Or where words of admonition may not be proper, because of the company, sometimes a sudden departure may be the best way to acquaint them with your disapprobation. But there are cases wherein such a tacit rebuke is not sufficient to answer your character and your office. Sometimes it is necessary for a minister to bear a public and express witness against shocking immorality, or against vile and impious discourse. Yet in general it must be said, *if a reproof can be given in secret*, it is best and most likely to prevail upon the offender, because it less irritates his passions, nor awakens his pride to vindicate himself, and to despise all reproof.

Whensoever Providence calls you to this work, make it appear to the transgressor, that you do it with regret and pain; let him see that you are not giving vent to your own wrath, but seeking his interest and welfare; and that were it not for the honour of God, and for his good, you would gladly excuse yourself from the ungrateful task; and that it is a work in which your spirit takes no delight. If the case and circumstances require some speeches that are awful and severe, let it appear still that your love and pity are the prevailing passions, and that even your anger has something divine and holy in it, as being raised and pointed against the sin rather than against the sinner. Study to make the whole of your carriage and discourse amongst men so engaging, as may invite strangers to love you, and allure them to love religion for your sake.

IV. In order to attain the same end, let your conversation be attended with much self-denial and meekness; avoid the character of a humourist, nor be unreasonably fond of little things, nor peevish for the want of them. Suppress rising passion early. If you are providentially led into argument and dispute, whether on themes of belief or practice, be very watchful lest you run into fierce contention, into angry and noisy debate. Guard against every word that savours of malice, or of bitter strife; watch against the first stirrings of sudden wrath or resentment; bear with patience the contradiction of others, and *forbear to return railing for railing*. *A minister must be gentle, and not apt to strive, but meekly instructing gainsayers.* He should never be ready either to give or take offence, but he should teach his people to neglect and bury resentment, to be deaf to reproaches, and to forgive injuries, by his own example, *even as God has forgiven all of us.* Let us imitate his divine pattern, who cancels and forgives our infinite offences *for the sake of Jesus Christ.* *A bishop must not be a brawler or a striker;* 1 Tim. iii. 3. but such as the apostle was, *gentle among the people, even as a nurse cherishes her children; and being affectionately desirous of their welfare, we should be willing to impart not*

only the gospel of God to them, but any thing that is dear to us, for the salvation of their souls; 1 *Thess.* ii. 7, 8.

Never suffer any differences (if possible) to arise between you and any of the people who are committed to your care, or attend on your ministrations: This will endanger the success of your best labours among them, and for this reason, though you visit families with freedom, yet avoid all unnecessary enquiries into their domestic affairs by a prying curiosity; the pleasure of such secrets will never pay for the danger that attends them, and your own business is sufficient for you. Avoid entering into any of the little private and personal quarrels that may arise among them, unless *Providence* give you an evident call to become a *peacemaker:* But even in this blessed work there is some danger of disobliging one side or the other; for though both sides are often to blame, yet each supposes himself so much in the right, that your softest and most candid intimation of their being culpable, even in little things, will sometimes awaken the jealousy of one or both parties against you; this will tend to abate their esteem of you, and give a coldness to their attention on your sacred services. We had need *be wise as serpents in this case, and harmless as doves;* Matt. x. 16.

V. Let your conversation be as fruitful and edifying as your station and opportunities will allow. Wheresoever you come, endeavour (if possible) that the world may be the better for you. If it be the duty of every christian, much more is it the indispensable duty of a minister of Christ, to take heed that *no corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth, but that which is good for edification, that it may minister grace to the hearers;* Eph. iv. 29. In your private visits to the members of your flocks, or to the houses of those who attend on your ministry, depart not (if possible) without putting in some word for God and religion, for Christ and his gospel: Take occasion, from common occurrences that arise, artfully and insensibly to introduce some discourse of things sacred. Let it be done with prudence and holy skill, that the company may be led into it ere they are aware. The ingenious Mr. Norris's little Discourse of Religious Conversation, and Mr. Matthew Henry's Sermon of Friendly Visits, have many excellent and valuable hints in them for our use.

It is to be confessed, that the best of ministers and christians sometimes fall into such company, that it is hardly possible to speak a word for God and the gospel among them. Try then whether you cannot lead the discourse to some useful theme in matters of science, art, and ingenuity, or to rules of prudence, morality, or human conduct. *There is a time of keeping silence, and restraining our lips as with a bridle, even from every thing that is piously good, while some sort of wicked men stand before us;* Psalm xxxix. 1, 2. The best men are sometimes *dumb with silence,* and dare not speak of God, or religion, lest they should *cast their pearls before swine, and give their holy things to dogs;* and lest they should provoke the unclean or the envious animals to foam out their impurities, or to *turn again and rend them.* But I doubt this caution has been carried much farther by our own cowardice and carnality of spirit, than David ever practised it in the xxxix. *Psalm,* or than Jesus Christ meant it in the vii. of *Matthew.* Let us take heed then that we abuse not this prudent caution to a manifest neglect of our duty, and to withhold our lips from the things of God, where Providence gives us a fair opportunity to speak of them.

Now and then take occasion to speak a kind and religious word to the children of the household; put them in mind of avoiding some childish folly, or of practising some

duty that belongs to their age. Let your memory be well furnished with the words of scripture, suited to the several ages of mankind, as well as to the various occasions of life, that *out of the abundance of the heart your mouth may speak* to the advantage of all that hear you, and particularly improve the younger parts of mankind, who are the hopes of the next generation. Make the lambs of the flock love you, and hear your voice with delight, that they may grow up under your instruction, to fill up the room of their fathers when they are called away to heaven: Nor let servants be utterly neglected, where Providence may afford you an opportunity to speak a word to their souls.

Learn what are the spiritual circumstances of the families whom you visit, and address them with a word in season, where you can have proper opportunity. Converse personally with them (if you can) about their eternal concerns. Let the ease and gentleness of your addresses to them, in a natural and familiar way, take off all that shy and bashful tincture from their minds, that is ready to prevent their uttering a word about the concern of their souls. Enquire tenderly into their state with regard to God: Draw sinners by words of compassion to repent of their crimes, to return to God, and to trust in Jesus the Saviour. Teach christians sincerely to love and practise duty, and to endure with honour the trials of life. Teach them to be sick and die as becomes the disciples of Christ. Treasure up your own experiences of divine things, not only as matters of delightful review in your own retirements, and for the encouragement of your own hope, but as lessons to be taught your people upon all proper occasions. *Whether you are afflicted, or whether you are comforted, let it be for their consolation and salvation;* 2 Cor. i. 6.

A minister, whose business and known employment is to speak of the things of God, should never be ashamed to impart divine knowledge, or to exhort to holiness with his lips, and to preach the word of the gospel of grace, whether the world calls it *in season or out of season;* 2 Tim. iv. 1. He that has the happy talent of parlour preaching, has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labour of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit. Our character should be all of a piece, and we should help forward the success of our public ministrations by our private addresses to the hearts and consciences of men, where Providence favours us with just occasions.

In order to promote this work of particular watchfulness over the flock of Christ, where he has made you a shepherd and overseer, it is useful to keep a catalogue of their names, and now and then review them with a pastoral eye and affection. This will awaken and incline you to lift up proper petitions for each of them, so far as you are acquainted with their circumstances in body or mind. This will excite you to give thanks to God on account of those who *walk as becomes the gospel*, and who have either begun, or proceeded and encreased in the christian life and temper by your ministry: You will observe the names of the negligent and backsliding christians, to mourn over them, and admonish them: You will be put in mind how to dispose of your time in christian visits, and learn the better to fulfil your whole ministry among them.

I shall enlarge no further in the enumeration of our duties, which would easily swell into a volume, if they were set before our eyes in their full extent: But in general I say, these are the methods whereby we must take heed to ourselves, if we would fulfil the ministry that we have received of Christ. To supply what I have omitted, read frequently, and with holy attention, the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, which will furnish

you richly with directions for your work; and I would recommend to you the examples of St. Paul and Timothy, as they are put well together in a little book by the Reverend Mr. Murray, which was printed but a few years ago. And as the account of the lives of many ancient ministers may furnish us with patterns for our imitation, so the life of the late venerable Dr. Cotton Mather, of New England, has many excellent hints in it for this purpose; *Chap.* ii. *Sect.* 1. and *Chap.* vi.

SECTION V.

A SOLEMN ENFORCEMENT OF THESE EXHORTATIONS ON THE CONSCIENCE.

THE things which I have spoken hitherto have been a display of the best methods I can think of, for the execution of the sacred office of the ministry: And so far as they are conformable to the word of God, we may venture to say these are your duties, my dear brother, and these are ours. It remains now to be considered, in what manner shall we enforce them on our own consciences, and on yours. What solemn obtestations shall I use to press these momentous concerns on all our hearts? What pathetic language shall I choose, what words of awful efficacy and divine fervour, which may first melt our spirits into softness, and then imprint these duties upon them with lasting power? We exhort and charge you, we exhort and charge ourselves, by all that is serious and sacred, by all that is important and everlasting, by all the solemn transactions between God and man which are past, and by all the more solemn and awful scenes which are yet to come, by all things in our holy religion which are dreadful and tremendous, and by all things in this gospel which are glorious and amiable, heavenly and divine; we charge you by all that is written in this book of God, according to which we shall be judged in the last day, by all the infinite and astonishing glories and terrors of an invisible world and an unseen eternity, we charge and exhort you, we exhort and charge ourselves, that we all *take heed to the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus that we fulfil it.* But let us descend to more particular forms of solemn exhortation, which perhaps may strike our consciences in a more sensible manner, and print the duties deeper upon our hearts.

First then, we exhort and charge you, we charge and exhort our own souls, by all the ancient transactions between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, for the salvation of sinful men, by all the eternal counsels of peace that passed between them to recover lost mankind to the favour and image of his Maker, that we preach this gospel with faithfulness, and be instant in the sacred work. It is the effect of these divine counsels that we publish to sinners; it is the merciful product of this sacred covenant of redemption that we are sent to proclaim to a lost world: This is the gospel that is put into our hands: God grant we may speak as becomes creatures entrusted with messages of such a heavenly original with affairs of such divine solemnity.

Secondly, We exhort and charge you, and we would charge ourselves to fulfil our ministry, by the invaluable treasure of this gospel which is put into our hands, by that word of life which is committed to our ministration. *Let us speak* with such a serious zeal *as becomes the oracles of God* and the embassies of his mercy, with such compassion to dying souls as is manifested in this gospel of love, with such inward fervour and holy solicitude for the success of our labours, that if it were possible, not the soul of one sinner

within the reach of our preaching might miss of this pardoning mercy and eternal joy. Oh let us not dare to trifle with God or men: Let us not dare be cold and lifeless in pronouncing the words of everlasting life, nor lazy and indolent in carrying these errands of divine love to a lost and perishing world.

Thirdly, We charge and beseech you, and we charge ourselves, *by the mercies of the living God*, which we hope both you and we have tasted, *by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which we hope we have felt and received, that you and we proclaim these mercies with a sacred zeal, and that in the name of God and of our Lord Jesus, we offer them to a miserable world with holy importunity. If ever we have known this wondrous compassion of God to ourselves, if ever we *have tasted that the Lord is gracious*, let us remember the relish we have had of this infinite compassion and condescending grace, when we were perishing under the power and guilt of sin; and with an imitation of that divine piety, let us entreat sinners to be saved. Let us remember all the alluring charms, the heavenly sweetnesses of forgiving, sanctifying, and saving grace; and do our utmost to set them all before sinners in the most inviting light, that we may win sinful men to accept of the same salvation.

Fourthly, We exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the dear and glorious *name of* our blessed *Jesus*, *whose servants we are*, whose name we bear, whose authority gives us commission, and who hath chosen us to be the ministers of his grace, the messengers of his dying love to the sons of men: We charge and beseech you to take care of the honour of his name in your ministrations, for we are sent forth to display before the eyes of the world the unsearchable riches of Christ. We are entrusted to spread abroad the honour of his name; O let us labour and strive that our zeal bear some proportion to the dignity of our trust, and let us take heed that we do nothing unworthy of our great and glorious Master in heaven, who dwells *at the right hand of God;* nothing unworthy of that holy and illustrious name, in which we are sent forth to preach this gospel, and to enlarge his kingdom. He has set us up as lights upon a hill in this sinful world, this benighted part of his dominion; let us burn and shine to his honour. He has assumed and placed us as stars in his right hand; let us shine and burn gloriously, that we may give light to a midnight world. O that we may point out to them *the morning star*, that we may bring them under the beams of the rising *sun of righteousness*, and guide them in the way to the hills of paradise and everlasting joy!

Fifthly, We beseech and charge you, while we charge ourselves, by the inestimable value of *the blood of Christ*, which purchased this salvation, that you and we display this illustrious and costly purchase to sinful perishing creatures; this precious blood, which is sufficient to redeem a world from death, and which is the price of all our infinite and everlasting blessings, demands that we publish and offer them in his name, with holy zeal and solicitude to sinful men. Oh may our hearts and our lips join to proclaim this redemption, this salvation, these everlasting blessings, with such a devout and sacred passion as becomes the divine price that was paid for them! Let us not be found triflers with the blood of Christ, nor let us bring cold hearts and dead affections, when we come to set before sinners the rich and inestimable stream of that life and blood that comes warm from the heart of the dying Son of God. Let perishing creatures know that it cost the Prince of Glory such a dreadful price as this to redeem them from eternal misery; and at the same time let our own spirits feel the powerful workings of gratitude to the

divine friend that bled and died for us, and let our language make it appear that we speak what we feel.

Sixthly, We entreat you with all tenderness, and with holy solemnity and fear, we charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the invaluable worth of perishing souls, that we fulfil all our ministry with a concern of heart equal to so important a case. How can we dare to speak with lifeless lips, with cold language, or a careless air, when we are sent to recover immortal souls from the brink of everlasting death? Oh let it never be said that such or such a soul was lost for ever through our carelessness, through our coldness, through our sinful sloth in publishing the offers of recovering grace! How tremendous and painful will such a thought be to our hearts! How dreadful the anguish of it to the awakened conscience of a drowsy preacher!

Seventhly, We charge you solemnly, and we charge ourselves, by the honour that Christ has done to us in times past, and has done to you this day, by the dignity of that office with which we have been formerly invested, and which you have this day received, that neither you nor we do any thing unbecoming this honourable character. Does Jesus, the divine Shepherd, appoint us under-shepherds of his flock; are we constituted *stewards* in his house, to dispense the mysteries of his grace, and the good things of his gospel; are we the *messengers* of our risen Lord to a dying world; are we the *ministers* of our exalted Saviour in his kingdom here below; are we the *stars in his right hand;* are we the earthly *angels in his churches?* Oh let us take heed that we do nothing to disgrace the titles of dignity and honour which he has put upon us in his word: Let us remember that every dignity brings an equal duty with it; and by fulfilling the various and difficult duties of our holy station, let us make it appear that our office was not conferred upon us in vain. It behoves us well to remember, that a blemish upon the name of a minister, arising from his own criminal conduct, brings a foul and lasting scandal upon the office itself, and upon the gospel of our glorified Lord, in whose name we act: And he will not fail to resent it.

Eighthly, We exhort and charge you therefore, my dear brother, by all the sacred solemnities of this day, by the vows of God which you have this day taken upon yourself, and *the bond wherewith you have bound your soul;* and we would each of us charge our own consciences, by our own former solemn vows, that neither you nor we ever suffer ourselves to forget or disregard our holy and powerful engagements; that we be awake at all times to fulfil our work, and that we never indulge low and trifling thoughts of what has formerly appeared to us, and what this day appears to you of such awful importance. Oh let us ever refresh upon our spirits the serious and important transactions of that day, wherein we gave up ourselves to Christ, in the sacred service of his church. Let us often review the vows of these remarkable seasons of our life, and renew and confirm them before the Lord.

Ninthly, We charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the decaying interest of religion, and the withering state of christianity at this day, that we do not increase this general and lamentable decay, this growing and dreadful apostasy, by our slothful and careless management of the trust that is committed to us. It is a divine interest indeed, but declining; it is a heavenly cause, but among us it is sinking and dying. O let us stir up our hearts, and all that is within us, and strive mightily in prayer and in preaching to revive the work of God, and beg earnestly that God, by a fresh and abundant effusion of his own Spirit, would *revive his own work* among us! *Revive thy own work, O Lord, in*

the midst of these years of sin and degeneracy, nor let us labour in vain. *Where is thy zeal, O Lord, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and thy mercies? Are they restrained?* O let us rouse our souls with all holy fervour to fulfil our ministry, for it will be a dreadful reproach upon us, and a burthen too heavy for us to bear, if we let the cause of Christ and godliness die under our hands for want of a lively zeal, and pious fervour and faithfulness in our ministrations.

Tenthly, We entreat, we exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the solemn and awful circumstances of a dying bed, and the thoughts of conscience in that important hour, when we shall enter into the world of spirits, that we take heed to the ministry which we have received: Surely that hour is hastening upon us, when our heads will lie upon a dying pillow. When a few more mornings and evenings have visited our windows, the shadows of a long night will begin to spread themselves over us: In that gloomy hour, conscience will review the behaviour of the days that are past, will take account of the conduct of our whole lives, and will particularly examine our labours and cares in our sacred office. Oh may we ever dread the thoughts of making bitter work for repentance in that hour, and of treasuring up terrors for a death bed by a careless and useless ministry!

Eleventhly, We exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, *by our gathering together* before the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the solemn account we must there give of the ministry with which he hath entrusted us, that we prepare by our present zeal and labour to render that most awful scene peaceful to our souls, and the issue of it joyful and happy. Let us look forward to that illustrious and tremendous appearance, when our *Lord shall come with ten thousands of his* holy angels to enquire into the conduct of men, and particularly of the ministers of his kingdom here on earth. Let us remember that we shall be examined in the light of the flames of that day? What we have done with his gospel which he gave us to preach? What we have done with his promises of rich salvation, which he sent us to offer in his name? What is become of the souls committed to our care? O that we may *give up our account with joy, and not with grief*, to the Judge of the living and the dead, in that glorious, that dreadful and decisive hour!

Twelfthly, We charge and warn you, my dear brother, and we warn and charge ourselves, by all the terrors written in this divine book, and by all the indignation and vengeance of God, which we are sent to display before a sinful world; by all the torments and agonies of hell, which we are commissioned to denounce against impenitent sinners, in order to persuade men to turn to God, and receive and obey the gospel, that we take heed to our ministry that we fulfil it. This vengeance and these terrors will fall upon our souls, and that with intolerable weight, with double and immortal anguish, if we have trifled with these terrible solemnities, and made no use of these awful scenes to awaken men to lay hold of the offered grace of the gospel. *Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, let us persuade men, for we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to our work;* 2 Cor. v. 10, 11.

In the last place, We entreat, we exhort and charge you, by all the joys of paradise, and the blessings of an eternal heaven, which are our hope and support under all our labours, and which in the name of Christ we offer to sinful perishing men, and invite them to partake thereof: Can we speak of such joys and glories with a sleepy heart and indolent language? Can we invite sinners who are running headlong into hell to

return and partake of these felicities, and not be excited to the warmest forms of address, and the most lively and engaging methods of persuasion? What scenes of brightness and delight can animate the lips and language of an orator, if the glories and the joys of the christian heaven and our immortal hopes cannot do it? We charge and entreat you therefore, and we charge ourselves, by the shining recompences which are promised to faithful ministers, that we keep this glory ever in view, and awaken our dying zeal in our sacred work. *There is a crown of righteousness laid up for those who have fought the good fight, who fihave nished their course, who have kept the faith;* 2 Tim. iv. 7. There is a *glory which is to be revealed, a crown of glory which fadeth not away,* prepared for every under-shepherd, who shall feed the flock of God under his care, and be found faithful in his work; *when the great Shepherd shall appear,* he himself will bestow it upon them. O let us look up continually to this immortal crown! Let us shake off our sluggishness, and rouse all our active powers at the prospect of this felicity. Let us labour and strive with all our might, that we may become possessors of this bright reward.

Before we conclude this exhortation, let us try to enforce it still with more power, by considering in whose presence are these solemnities transacted, and these charges given. We exhort and charge you then, in the presence of this church, who hath called you to minister to them in holy things, and who give up their souls this day to your care, to your instructions, to your conduct in the ministrations of the gospel. We charge and exhort you that you *take the oversight of them* with all humility and diligence, and sacred delight, that you make the life of their souls your perpetual care, that none of them may be lost through your default.

We exhort and charge you in the presence of this whole assembly, who are met together to behold and hear *our faith and order in the gospel.* They are witnesses of the solemn obligations you have this day laid yourself under, and will be called as witnesses against you in the day of Christ, if you take no care to perform your sacred vows. We exhort and charge you, in the presence of the holy and elect angels, who are continually waiting in their ministry on the saints in the church, and viewing with delight the ministration of the gospel of Christ, their Lord and ours, as it is managed by the hand of men. They see, they hear, and they will bear record against you; a dreadful record of broken vows and faithless promises, if you are found careless and unfaithful.

Forgive me, dear brother, forgive the solemn language of these exhortations; we hope, we believe, we are persuaded your heart is right with God, and you will be found faithful in that day, and that men and angels will be witnesses of your zeal and your labours in the sacred work. But we also feel so much coldness in our own spirits, that we have need to address you and ourselves in most solemn and awful language.

We charge you then finally, in the presence of God, the great God, the all-knowing and almighty, the universal Governor and Judge, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he hath committed all judgment, *who hath eyes as a flame of fire* to see through our hearts and souls; we charge you, and we charge ourselves, under the all-seeing eye of the great God, and of his Son Jesus our Lord, that with holy care and diligence both we and you fulfil the work of our ministry with which Christ hath entrusted us, that we may approve ourselves to him in zeal, and faithfulness, and love; in zeal for his honour and his gospel, in faithfulness to our sacred commission, and in love and pity to the souls of men. If sinners will continue obstinate and impenitent, after all our pious cares, labours and prayers, their blood will not lie at our door; *our work is* left *with the Lord, and our judgment and*

reward *with our God;* Isaiah xlix. 4. But if it be possible, we should with utmost earnestness and compassion seize the souls of sinners who are on the very borders of hell, we should *pluck them like brands out of the fire,* and save them from burning; *Jude* verse 23.

O may the spirit of the blessed God favour us with his divine aids, that we may bring home many wanderers to the fold of Christ, the great Shepherd; that we may rescue many souls from death, who may be *our joy, and crown, and glory in the day of the Lord Jesus!* May this be your happiness, my dear brother, may this be mine? May this be the happiness of every one of us who minister in holy things, through the abounding grace of Christ and the influences of his Spirit: And may it be the happiness of all who in different places attend our constant holy ministrations, and particularly of all that hear us this day, to stand and appear with us before the judgment-seat of Christ with mutual delight and joy: And may each of us who preach and hear, receive our proper portion of the everlasting recompence and glory which shall be assigned to those who are faithful, by Jesus, our Saviour and our Judge, *to whom be dominion and praise for ever and ever.* Amen.

A SERIOUS ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

MATT. v. 57.

WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?

SECTION I.

THE TEXT APPLIED TO THE DISCIPLES.

THAT excellent sermon which our Lord preached on the mount seems to be addressed in a special manner to his disciples, though a mixed multitude might attend to hear it. The first verse of the chapter tells us, that Jesus *seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit:* And there are several expressions in the sermon which plainly shew that the discourse was chiefly directed to the disciples, Matt. v. 13, &c. *Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world;* which he would never say to a multitude of mixed people that followed him, made up probably of Galilean gentiles, as well as Jews.

The words I have chosen are a warm and pathetic question put to the consciences of the disciples, with regard to the great duty of charity and love, which our blessed Saviour had been just preaching in sublimer degrees than the ancient prophets, *If you salute none but your brethren, if you love only those that love you;* or as Luke vi. 33. *If ye do good to them that do good to you, what do you more than others? For the publicans and sinners do the same.* Persons who make no pretences to godliness, and who neither enjoy the advantages with which you are blessed, nor lie under equal engagements; they love their own friends as well as you, and make grateful returns for benefits received; they practise many duties of morality, but I expect that you my disciples should far excel them, both in the duties you practise, and in the manner of performance: I expect that *you should love your enemies, and should bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you,* as in verse 44. What is here spoken thus warmly by our Lord to his own disciples, concerning love, and civility, and kindness to our fellow-creatures, may with the same justice be applied to most of the duties which we owe to God or man, and give us ground to raise this general doctrine or theme of discourse:

Doctrine. God requires and expects higher improvements in virtue and religion from persons who enjoy peculiar advantages, or lie under special obligations. Now to improve this thought, and press it upon all our consciences, I shall enquire, 1. What are the circumstances under which the disciples of Christ then lay that obliged them to superior virtue and goodness; and 2. I shall endeavour to apply this to ourselves, by enquiring what peculiar circumstances of advantage and obligation all or any of us lie under to exceed others in any instances of duty, either to God or our neighbour, and whether we have answered these engagements or no.

In answer to the first enquiry, *What were the circumstances of the disciples at this time?* We may consider our Saviour in his sermon exhorting them to superior degrees of good-

ness, as they appeared under these two characters; 1. as they were Jews, and not heathens, as a part of the nation and church of Israel, in distinction from the men of other nations or gentiles; or 2. as they were the *disciples of Christ*, and not of the scribes or pharisees; as they were followers of a new preacher, who was neither authorized nor acknowledged by their priests and doctors of the law, who had no countenance from the established national church, and who frequently worshipped in separate assemblies.* And there is good reason for this twofold consideration of them, if we remember that in my text Christ compares his disciples with publicans, or the gatherers of the taxes, whom the Roman governors appointed, and who were most of them heathens, and were often guilty of oppression and injustice, and therefore he demands of his disciples greater degrees of goodness than they ever practised; and in the twentieth verse of this chapter he compares them with the scribes and pharisees, the strict pretenders to religion, and the teachers of it among the Jews; and assures them, that *except their righteousness exceed that of the scribes and pharisees, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;* Matt. v. 20.

I. If we consider the disciples of Christ as Jews, as a part of the nation and church of Israel, they had many special advantages for religion above the heathen world, and many peculiar obligations. They were interested in those special marks of honour and love that God had set upon the jewish nation, *they were chosen to be a peculiar people to the Lord*, and were devoted to him from their infancy: They had their laws given them by God himself, as their King and Governor, and could have no doubt of the wisdom, and justice, and equity of them: They had a multitude of special revelations both of duty and grace from God as their King and their God; from God as the object of their worship and their everlasting rewarder? They had the living oracles committed to them for their instruction, wherein divine truths and duties were written down in plain language, as the lessons of their faith and the rules of their practice: They had many institutions of religion and worship dictated by God himself, and they were not left to the wild and uncertain fancies of men to invent ceremonies of their own, which God will never approve: They had the gospel preached to them under types and shadows, and there were many clear discoveries of *the forgiveness of sin, and reconciliation to God, to be obtained for sinners who return to God by repentance, and who rely on the promises of his grace.* Well might our Saviour say, I expect from you superior degrees of religion and virtue above the heathen and the publican, above the Roman tax-gatherers that dwell amongst you, and even those of your own nation, who make no strict profession of piety or goodness. Think with yourselves, therefore, examine your hearts and practice, what do you more than they? And let your consciences be able to give an honourable answer.

II. Let the disciples of Christ be considered as *the followers of a new preacher*, in a way of distinction from the disciples of the scribes and the jewish doctors of the law. They sat under the ministry of a rising prophet, Jesus of Galilee, the supposed *son of a*

* It is granted, indeed, that our blessed Saviour did not separate himself from the Jewish national church, so as to abstain from the worship of the temple, because that was expressly of God's own establishment; nor did he avoid the synagogues while they would suffer him to preach there, and to warn the people against their traditions: Yet there were so many corruptions in that day that had crept into the national church, that he found he could not fulfil his ministry, nor promote the salvation of souls according to his desire, and his heavenly commission, without holding separate assemblies.

carpenter, who had no approbation, nor authority, nor countenance from the established church, who held *separate assemblies* for praying and preaching, and who taught the people sometimes on a mountain, sometimes in the wilderness, sometimes on the sea shore, and at other times in private houses; and here we shall find that the disciples lay under farther circumstances of engagement to greater purity, and a higher perfection in holiness. They had *the Son of God* himself for their preacher, *who spake so as never man spake*, who had all his doctrines and his messages from heaven, and *spake what his Father commanded him;* a preacher who explained the law in a more perfect manner, and raised it to sublimer degrees of virtue even than Moses himself, who received it from God; and he purified it also from the false and corrupt glosses which the scribes and doctors of that degenerate age had put upon it; an ambassador from heaven, who published the tidings of rich grace, and pardon, and salvation, in a clearer manner, and gave them stronger encouragements to repentance, and faith, and piety, and brotherly love, than the world had ever known before.

They had miracles wrought to convince them of the truth of the commission of Christ from heaven; *Matt.* iv. 24. The God of nature spoke often to them in some work of wonder, which was superior to all the powers of nature, to assure them that Jesus was the minister of his Father's grace to the sons of men. They had seen some of the prophecies fulfilled in him, and some of the characters of the Messiah exemplified in his person, in his doctrine, and his conduct; for though this sermon stands near the beginning of St. *Matthew's* history, yet it was by no means the first sermon that he preached, nor the very beginning of his ministry, as will easily appear if we consult *Matt.* iv. and *Luke* iv. where we have several accounts of his preaching before this.

Let us consider another great advantage they enjoyed above others; they had the noblest and most sublime pattern of holiness always before them, who practised self-denial, humility, zeal for the honour of God, mortification to the world, resistance of temptations, and retired devotion, in a superior manner to whatever any mere mortal attained or practised. And besides all this, they made a profession of greater strictness and purity by their adherence to Christ and his preaching, who appeared in the world as a new teacher, to reform the vices of men, and found fault with the preachers of the established church, for the many corruptions both of doctrine and practice that reigned amongst them.

Now, "To what purpose (might our Lord say) and for what end are all these advantages given you, if not to make you wiser and better than the rest of the nation? And what is it you pretend in following my sermons, and attending upon my ministry in separate assemblies? Is it not that you may become more strictly religious, and that your virtue and your goodness may exceed your neighbours? If the teachings of the scribes and the doctors of the law are sufficient for your instruction, and equal to your wishes and your hopes, why do ye follow me from town to town, and from one part of the nation to the other? Does not your own profession of being my disciples oblige you to greater degrees of piety? And have you not peculiar advantages for this end, by attending on my ministrations? I expect, therefore, that you should live, and speak, and act to the honour of God and the good of men, in a degree and manner far superior to what *the sinners and publicans* can pretend to, and that *you exceed in righteousness* all the pretences and the practices of *the pharisees and the scribes.*"

SECTION II.

THE APPLICATION OF THE WORDS OF THE TEXT TO OUR OWN AGE AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

THUS having shewn how reasonable was this demand of Christ upon his own disciples, we come in the next place to apply all this to our own case, to our own age and circumstances. And here, in order to enforce this enquiry upon our consciences, *what do we more than others?* We shall consider our character and our privileges; 1. That we are *christians*, and not Jews nor heathens. 2. That we are *protestants*, and not papists. 3. That we are *protestant dissenters*, who worship God in separate assemblies, and follow the teachings of men who have no commission from the established and national church; and under each of these characters we shall enquire how much our circumstances of advantage and obligation are superior to those of the rest of the world from whom we are distinguished, and whether our behaviour has been answerable to these special engagements.

I. We are *christians*, and not Jews nor heathens. Let me speak to each of these apart:

1st, We are not born in a land of heathenism, in gross darkness, and in the shadow of death, and therefore our piety and virtue should far exceed all the practices of the heathen world. We are not left to the teachings of the book of nature, and to the silent lectures which the sun, moon, and stars can read us: Nor are we abandoned merely to the instructions of religion that we may derive from *the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the heaven*, or any of the works of God the Creator.

We are not given up in the things of religion merely to the wandering and uncertain conduct of our reason, feeble as it is in itself, corrupted by the fall of *Adam our first father*, beset with many sins and prejudices, and *turned aside from the truth* by a thousand false lights of sense and appetite, fancy and passion, by the vain customs of the country, and the corruptions of our sinful hearts. We are not bewildered among the poor remains of divine tradition delivered down from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to his posterity in the several nations of the earth; we are not left to spell out our duty from those sorry broken fragments of revelation, which are so lost and defaced amongst most of the nations, and so mingled with monstrous folly and delusion, that it is hard to find any relicks of truth or goodness in them. We are not given up to foul idolatry and wild superstition, nor to the slavish and tyrannical dictates of priests and kings, who contrive what ceremonies they please, and impose them on the people, which is the case of a great part of the heathen world.

Poor and deluded creatures! feeling about in the dark for the way to happiness, in the midst of rocks, and precipices, and endless dangers, and led astray into many mischiefs and miseries by those whom they take for guides and rulers. And what an infamous and shameful thing would it be for us, who have the divine light of the gospel shining among us to direct our paths, if we should read among the records of the heathen nations, that any of them have behaved better than we have done, either in duties to God or man, and exceeded us either in personal or in social virtues? Nay, what a scandal would it be to our profession, if we should not abundantly exceed all the shining virtues of the

heathen nations, since the divine light that shines upon us, and the divine lessons that are published amongst us, are so infinitely superior to all that the heathen world has enjoyed?

And yet, to our shame and reproach, there are several single examples found in ancient history of some of their moral and social virtues, beyond what most of us have arrived at. What patience under injuries and cutting reproaches is ascribed to Socrates? What a contentment of soul under great poverty, what calmness under oppression and pain, and what a noble disinterestedness in the comforts or calamities of this life was found in Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher? What a friendly and forgiving spirit in Antonius, the emperor? What a moderation in the enjoyments of life, what a brave contempt of present death, and what a generous love of their country and self-denial for the public good do we read of in some of the ancient Romans, before the ages of splendour and luxury had corrupted them? It is granted, indeed, these instances are but few and rare, and we have good reason to hope and believe that the virtues which are practised in the christian world are abundantly more common and numerous, and therefore they pass without such public notice and renown: But is it not a shame there should be any one instance of heathen virtue transcending the practice of christians?

And if we consult the histories of their religious affairs, we shall find several examples of their zeal for sorry superstitions and ridiculous idolatries, rising higher than ours has done in the practice of our divine religion: How far have their self-denial and sufferings, their fatigues and fervency in the worship of their idols, transcended our devotion to *the living and true God?* What costly honours have they done to some of their mediator gods and goddesses, beyond what we have a heart to do for our *Jesus, the only true Mediator between God and man?* With what curiosity and exactness, and unwearied diligence, have the votaries of those false deities, in some of the eastern and western nations, in ancient and later times, fulfilled their washings, and scourgings, and painful abstinences, and practised all the austere rites of their religions, while we are cold and indifferent, sluggish and indolent in paying the sacred worship we owe to the great and blessed God, and to his Son Jesus? Lord, will not this heathen zeal condemn our shameful sloth and negligence?

Again 2dly. We are *christians* and not Jews: How much should our practices of piety exceed theirs? *Our gospel is not hidden* under types and figures, nor veiled under the smoke of incense and sacrifice, as it was in the religion of Moses: How cheerfully should we receive, and study, and rejoice in this gospel of salvation, which shines amongst us in its fullest light? And while we remember that we are freed from the bondage of numerous ceremonies, how diligently should we attend to the two sacred institutions of *baptism and the Lord's Supper*, which Christ has given us, and take care that all the spiritual designs of them be attained in us and upon us: We are not *waiting for a Messiah yet to come*, which was the case of *many prophets, and kings, and righteous men* under the jewish dispensation: *Blessed are our eyes and our ears*, for they have read and heard those glorious transactions and doctrines relating to the Messiah *the great prophet, the King of Israel, and the Saviour of the world*, for which the fathers waited from age to age. With what zeal and joy, with what holy exercises and raptures of faith and love should we receive *Jesus the Son of God*, the great Messiah, who has all the characters of this divine prophet and this promised Saviour found in him? With what a firm and steady soul should we receive the doctrines, and maintain the articles

of the religion of Jesus, in opposition to all the snares of infidelity, and the artifices of every deceiver.

Again, We are not left, as the Jews were, to the obscure language of prophecy, to inform us of the grace and blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; nor are we put to spell out our faith by such weak and idle commentaries of men, as the jewish rabbins have left us, whereby to understand the law of Moses: We have the New Testament given us to explain the Old; Christ and his apostles are sent to us as interpreters of the ancient prophets: *the veil is taken away while the books of Moses are read among us*, and many of the dark figures and the typical scenes of Providence that belonged to the jewish dispensation, are now unfolded and explained in a divine light. How should *our hearts burn within us* under an evangelical ministry, in imitation of the two disciples; *Luke* xxiv. 32. while Christ was unfolding to them the spiritual glories and graces of his kingdom, which were delivered by Moses and the prophets in more obscure language? How delightfully should we converse with the two books of God, the Old Testament and New, when we understand the scripture so far beyond what the best of the Jews could do, who had only the first of these divine writings given them, without a second to explain it: How much, therefore, should our faith and our hope, our love and our holiness transcend the virtues and graces of a Jew.

And yet, alas! how greatly does our piety, our zeal, our self-government, our single and social virtues, and our universal holiness, fall short of those degrees to which some of those jewish saints attained? Which of us can compare with the first of their leaders, *Moses, the servant of God*, in an unwearied attendance upon the commands of his Lord, in opposition to all the threatenings of the King of Egypt, and the murmurings of his own people Israel? Which of us would have shewn such *meekness* in bearing so many indignities and affronts from an ungrateful race of men, whom he had rescued from the brick-kilns, and taskmasters, and cruel bondage? Which of us follow God so fully as Caleb and Joshua did, and could bear such an undaunted testimony to the truth of his word, and the excellency of the promised blessings, in opposition to the clamours of a whole nation, and the danger of being stoned upon the spot? How few are there in the present age of christians, who are so well acquainted with the efficacy and success of prayer as Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who poured out her petitions before God, and left her cares and her burthens there, *and went away and was no more sad?* When shall any of us arise to the blessed experiences of David? When shall we live so much by faith as he did, and triumph over all our fears, even in the midst of enemies, dangers and distresses? When shall we arrive at such a humble, holy intimacy with God, as *to walk with him all the day long*, and communicate with him all our concerns, our comforts, our dangers and our difficulties, and be able to *rejoice in hope* as he did? How far are the ways of his faith and love above ours, *like the way of an eagle in the air*, too high and too hard for us? When shall our zeal for the house of God carry us to such a pious solicitude about it as his did? And when shall we feel such longing desires and insatiable thirstings after the presence of God in holy ordinances, as he found? Which of us can say with the humble spirit of Micah, vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he arise and plead my cause?* Or where is the christian that can assume the words of *Habakkuk*, iii. 17. with the same spirit of faith? *Though there be no fruit in the field, nor herds in the stall, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.* But it is time to proceed to some other cha-

racters that belong to us, and wherein we enjoy advantages for holiness superior to others; for it is a most evident and heavy reproach upon us, that either Jews or heathens should exceed us in any instances of the religious or civil life.

II. We are *protestants* and not papists; and what progress have we made in devout religion and in real piety, beyond what some of the poor deluded people have done under the power of popish darkness, superstition and tyranny, notwithstanding our transcendent advantages? We are not withheld from the pure and perfect instructions of the word of God in our own language, nor imposed upon by *the traditions of men* as the papists are, who are generally *forbid to keep Bibles* in their own custody in most of the popish nations, nor are they suffered to acquaint themselves with the scriptures in their mother tongue. We can see the doctrines with our own eyes, which we are required to believe; we can read the duties which we are commanded to practise; we can learn the whole counsel of God for our salvation, and be instructed in all the articles of faith and manners from the word of God itself. We are not deprived of this *key of knowledge*, that leads us into the treasures of heaven and eternity: We have the Bible in our hands, we read it in our families, it is open before us in our retirements: How diligently should we search and enquire into every truth and duty that is proposed to us, as the noble Bereans did; *Acts* xvii. 11. With what zeal and fervency should we practise every divine appointment, when the obligations come upon our consciences more immediately from the word of God? And how careful should we be to worship God more exactly according to his own appointments, since we have his own word to instruct us?

How great and unspeakable are our advantages beyond those who dwell under popish governments! Alas for those poor benighted and imprisoned creatures, held in the *chains of darkness!* How wretchedly are their consciences governed by blind leaders, and they are not suffered to believe any thing but what the church teaches them, *i. e.* the priests, who are made the directors of their faith and practice? Their belief is founded on the word of poor fallible men, and sometimes of wicked and deceitful men too, instead of the dictates of heaven, and the words of the true and living God. They must believe nothing contrary to what the church believes, though it be never so plainly written in scripture; for if the church has determined against the plainest doctrines of the Bible, they must be construed to another sense, according as the church from time to time shall please to interpret the word of God. What a wonder is it if any of these miserable mortals, under such wretched disadvantages, should attain to the practice of true religion, and the faith and holiness of the gospel? But how much more shameful would it be to us, if any of them under these disadvantages should be found to exceed and outshine our character and our practice?

We are not taught to repeat our prayers like parrots *in an unknown tongue*. Oh, what a mockery of heaven is this! What an high affront to God and to the reason of man, to chatter over words and syllables before the God of heaven, and to address him about the important things of grace, and salvation, and eternal life, and yet know nothing of our wants or our petitions! How serious, how fervent, how spiritual should our devotion be, in comparison of theirs, who are taught to pronounce a little gibberish in Latin instead of serious devotion? Whenever I read of any instances of religious and devout papists, and especially if they are persons of the lower rank of life, who have not the advantages of the men of learning among them; and when I reflect to what heights here and there one of them have risen in the spiritual parts of religion, I blush and am ashamed

of myself, who enjoy so much superior advantages, and sink so far below them in these divine exercises.

We are not brought up in the superstitions and idolatries of the church of Rome; we are not taught to worship saints and angels, nor required to bow down before a piece of bread in the hand of a priest, nor to pay religious honours *to images of wood and stone, of gold and silver;* we are not taught to address ourselves to departed saints and angels for mediators, to apply to the virgin mother instead of Christ her Son, nor to address the apostles instead of their Master: We are directed only to *the one Mediator, Christ the Son of God,* who is all-sufficient, to reconcile us to God, and to make our persons and our prayers acceptable before the throne; whereas the disciples of the pope distribute the care of their best interests amongst many mediators, and recommend themselves to the protection of many saints and saviours. Well, let us enquire, then, are our hearts united in the faith and love of Jesus, the only Mediator, more than theirs? Are we better acquainted with Jesus the Son of God, to whom we have committed all our immortal concerns, since our thoughts and hopes, our wishes and prayers, are not divided amongst many intercessors? Do we pay more honour to Jesus our only Saviour than they do, who have so many objects of their trust and worship to divide their hearts and devotion into slender streams?

What shall I say for our own excuse, if I should find some papists exceeding us in their love to God, in their devotion to Christ, and in their benevolence to men? I believe, indeed, their number is but small; but methinks it is a shame and reproach to us under our superior advantages, if there should be found any of that corrupt and superstitious church practising the christian religion, in the substantial duties of it, better than we. When I read Thomas à Kempis resigning himself to his Lord and Saviour in such pious language, *Give me what thou wilt, and as much or little as thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Deal with me as thou knowest to be most proper, and as may bring thee most glory; place me where thou pleasest, I am in thy hand; turn me and toss me from side to side: Behold thy servant ready to be and bear every thing, for my desire is not to live to myself, but to thee.* When I hear that excellent man, the Archbishop of Cambray, lifting up his devout heart thus to heaven, in the same strains of pious resignation, *I am for thee, O my God, against myself; none could have thus divided me from myself but thy hand only. I leave myself in thy hand, O my God, mould this clay of mine, and turn it up, and turn it down again, give it a form, then break it and new mould it; it is entirely thine, it has nothing to reply, it is enough for me that this being of mine serves thy purposes and thy good pleasure; command, appoint, forbid what I shall do or what I shall not do: Elevated, abased, comforted, suffering, I for ever adore thee, in sacrificing all my own will to thine:* When I hear this language of a papist, how am I ashamed of my own restiff and unpliable heart? How much do I want of such an entire resignedness to my Maker's will? With what pleasure do I read Monsieur de Renty in the zeal of his inward piety running counter to the practices of his own communion, and declaring that, *If we know not our own devotion rather by the mortification and denial of ourselves, than by the multiplication of our devout exercises, it is to be feared they will be rather practices of condemnation than of sanctification: And yet we see the work of Jesus Christ is almost reduced to this pass among the spiritual persons of our times.* But it is with a sacred regret and self-displicency I would look upon myself, while I review other parts of his life, where he

took upon him all the mean and laborious figures of service to his fellow-creatures, and conformed himself to all inconveniences for the good of his neighbour: *Methinks,* says he, *my soul is all charity, and I am not able to express with what ardency and strange expansion I find my heart to be renewed in the divine life of my new-born Saviour, burning all in love towards mankind.* How do I wish that I could repeat from my heart the words of that poor servant maid, Armelle Nicholas, in France, in the last century; *God has not sent me into this world but to love him, and by his great mercy I have loved him so much, that I cannot do it more in the way of mortal creatures; I must go to him, that I may love him in the way of the blessed.*

But before I dismiss this head entirely, I would take notice of one advantage more which the protestants of Great Britain enjoy toward the practice of charity and love to their fellow-creatures, above and beyond what the papists generally enjoy; and yet even in this very grace of charity there have been instances, as you see, wherein some of them exceed us. Let us remember that we are not educated in such a cruel and bloody religion as the papists, which cruelty, though it is not practised by all of them, yet is taught by their leaders. Their religion encourages and inspires men to murder and destroy their fellow-creatures for God's sake, as our Saviour himself foretold; *John* xvi. 2. They first call us heretics, and then condemn, torment, and murder us, and blindly imagine *they are doing God service.* Oh, bless the name of the Lord for your freedom from the hand and power of those whose religion it is to do mischief in the name of God, and to destroy those that the priests and the inquisitors shall pronounce guilty of any opinions which they are pleased to call heresy! How often do they dress up a protestant as it were in a wolf's or a bear's skin, and send out all their dogs to devour him? Bless God with all the powers of your souls, that you are not bred up in these barbarous sentiments; nor should you think yourself worthy of the name of a protestant, if you do not make the Bible the rule of your faith and practice, and give others leave to find out their duty also in that holy book, according to their own best sense of it, as well as yourselves. But if you reproach and persecute the sincere enquiries after the truth, if you bite and devour those who differ from you in their religious sentiments, who are humble and sincere enquirers, what do you more than others? What are you better than the bloody papists? And indeed how much worse are you than some few of them whose souls abhor this cruel and antichristian tyranny? This barbarous temper of yours would run all the lengths of persecution, even to blood and burning, if the sword and the fire were entrusted in your hands. Shew therefore that you live in a land of protestant principles, and an age of liberty, and that the spirit of the gospel, the spirit of charity and love dwells in you, by allowing to all men the freedom of their own opinions, while they maintain the public peace: And as you profess to follow the divine rule of scripture, and the dictates of your own consciences with honesty and sincere zeal, believe charitably that your fellow-christians of a different party may seek after the truth with as much zeal and with equal sincerity, though they may not happen to see all things in the same light, nor embrace the same principles. Let not your accusations and censures grieve their spirits. Make it appear that you love your neighbours, your fellow-christians, and even the enemies of your person and your religion better than the papists, from whom you would distinguish yourselves with honour. But this shall suffice for the general distinction between papist and protestant.

III. We are come in the next place to consider ourselves as *protestant dissenters:* Hereby we are distinguished from our fellow-christians who belong to the national church of England, in our choice of different modes of worship and ministrations of holy things. Permit me here to address you, who are my hearers under this character, and enquire what do you more than others: You who attend upon the worship of God in separate assemblies, and sit under the ministrations of those who have no commission from the spiritual guides of the nation and rulers of the church; you who in this respect are placed under such a sort of providence, as to be imitators of the disciples of Christ when he maintained separate assemblies, and preached to the people without receiving any public authority, or so much as countenance and approbation from the rulers of the national church in his day. Surely this is a question of very awful importance, and very necessary, while we continue our separation, what higher degrees of piety or virtue do we practise? What sublimer advances in religion are we arrived at? Wherein are we better by all our nonconformity, than those who constantly conform to the church of England as by law established? What do all our pretences to separation mean, if we ascend to no superior degrees of godliness?

But before I enter into so nice a subject as a comparison between the advantages and obligations to strict religion, which are found amongst the dissenters, or amongst the church of England, and their different improvements under them, I desire to lay down this one caution, *viz.* That nothing which I am going to speak should be construed to relate to any of those holy souls who are of the first rank in the school of Christ, who are the most pious and the most strictly religious, either among the members of the church of England, or among protestant dissenters; for I am not going to speak to or of these persons, nor would I make comparison between them: I would set them all before me as examples for my humble imitation and yours, and not for the subjects of my comparison. I am verily persuaded, there are many persons of both communities who are dear to God, *whose names* have an honourable place *in the book of life, who walk humbly* and closely *with God* in all the known duties of the christian state, whose sobriety in what relates to themselves, whose justice and charity in what relates to their neighbours, and whose devotion in what belongs to God, is glorious and exemplary indeed; who are taught and led by the same spirit of holiness, and are largely interested in the favour of *God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.* To those holy souls on both sides I would only ask leave to say, Go on in your illustrious course of christianity; rival each other in the swiftness of your race, in your pious and divine progress toward heaven; and may each of you *run so far, as to obtain one of the larger and fairer crowns of righteousness that shall never fade away.* Yet I can hardly withhold myself from pronouncing this one word of justice, That if any of the members of the established church in this most pious rank of men, are superior to those of our dissenting churches, I think they ought to have the honour of this superiority; and some degree of shame will belong to the best of us, if we are found inferior to them either in virtue towards men, or piety towards God, because of our superior advantages and obligations.

Having laid down this caution, I come to declare that the persons whom I would at this time compare together, are the common professors of religion in the church of England, and the common professors among the dissenters, the bulk of the people both on the one side and on the other; and I would fain excite you who hear me this day,

who are professors of religion, and call yourselves protestant dissenters, to bethink yourselves a little concerning the sensible decay of real goodness that is found amongst you, in order to awaken you to the warmest zeal and utmost endeavours to revive languishing and dying religion. Give me leave, while I have the honour to be a preacher amongst you in this congregation, to address you in the words of our blessed Saviour, who was in his day a divine teacher to a congregation meeting upon a mountain, and in the pathetic language of admonition and love I would say to my hearers, as he did to his disciples, *What do you more than others?* What is there of duty to God or man, wherein you separatists from the public establishment exceed the rest of the nation? And to enforce this exhortation, I shall here consider,

I. What real advantages for religion you enjoy above your brethren of the church of England, according to your own common sense of things.

II. What superior obligations lie upon you, by your particular profession of religion in a separate way. And under each of these two general heads, I shall run through various particulars.

SECTION III.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

The first question that offers itself to our consideration is this, What are the real and special advantages for improvement in religion which you protestant dissenters enjoy, or suppose you enjoy, above your brethren of the church of England? And here I desire my readers to observe, that I neither design to begin nor maintain any controversy with my brethren of the established church in these papers, which are written purely to revive practical godliness amongst us; nor would I willingly give them any offence. I confess, indeed, that it may not be improper, in some parts of our ministrations, to enter into the merits of the cause, and modestly to give our people an account of the reasons why we separate from the public worship of the parish: And yet this we have almost universally declined for many years out of respect to the church, nor is this my present business or intent in this place; nor shall I stand to enumerate all our differences, nor insist upon a vindication of our conduct in the several particulars, that go to make up the grounds of nonconformity. You may find them put together and well supported by other writers, and particularly by Dr. Calamy, in his three volumes of Moderate Nonconformity; and the chief heads of them, so far as they relate to the people, are well abridged in a very little book, called Lay-nonconformity Justified; to which I refer my readers, who desire to take a more particular notice of the reasons of our separation.

My only design in this place is, to mention some of those advantages which you protestant dissenters are generally supposed to enjoy above your neighbours in the affairs of religion; and even these I shall cite and borrow from those books which were written several years ago, to make it appear that I design no contention: And if I am necessitated to speak of some of the differences that lie between us, the reader will see that I represent them not in the language of dispute, nor pursue them any farther than to shew mere matter of fact, that I may thence derive more forcible and pungent warnings and reproofs to those of our own communion, who are negligent of piety and virtue under all their supposed advantages.

Advantage I. *You are not in so much danger of taking up with the outward forms of religion, instead of the inward power and more spiritual parts of it,* as your neighbours may be, and that particularly in the two following instances: First, You are in no such danger of mistaking baptism for inward and real regeneration,* as those who are educated in the established church. You are not in the least tempted or encouraged in any of our ministrations to suppose, that your souls are regenerated by the outward ceremony of baptism, or that you are really *born again and made new creatures* by being baptized with water; to which unhappy and dangerous mistake the office of baptism in the church of England has been thought to give too much countenance, in the plain sense of the expressions, and without any sufficient guard or caution: And the answer in the catechism which children are taught, does but too much confirm and establish them in this mistake: Read the second question in the church catechism: Quest. *Who gave you this* name? Answ. *My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.* And when their parents hear it mentioned so expressly at the baptism, that the child, after it is baptized, *is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, and that this infant is regenerated with the Holy Spirit,* it is no wonder if they encourage children to believe in a most literal sense what their catechism expressly teaches them, that they are *all born again* so as to become the children of God, members of Christ, and heirs of heaven by baptism. I readily grant, that many of the ministers of the church and the wiser christians do know and believe, that there is no such inward grace and salvation really communicated by baptismal water: Yet almost all the expressions in the offices relating both to public and private baptism, and to the baptism of those of riper years, establish persons in the same mistake, and that as I hinted before, without any manifest caution to secure them from it.

But you, my friends, who separate from the national forms of worship, are afraid of receiving this doctrine, for you think it a matter of dangerous consequence both with regard to yourselves and your children. You have been taught and have learned that *regeneration is a great and holy change, wrought in the powers of your soul, your understanding, will, and affections by the Spirit of God,* whereby you come to see the evil and defiling nature of sin, and the dreadful consequences of it, beyond whatever you saw before; whereby you learn the excellency and necessity of holiness; whereby your sensual, vain, and earthly temper of mind is altered, and your heart set upon the things of God, and heaven, and eternity, instead of the perishing enjoyments of this life; whereby your sinful nature is renewed by divine grace, and you are brought to love God and fear him, to hope and trust in him, as he has manifested his grace in Christ Jesus his Son; and whereby you are inclined to practise all the duties of piety towards God, and justice and charity towards your fellow-creatures. You are taught also, that though baptism or washing with water be a sign, or figure, or emblem of this great and holy change, this purification fom the defilement of sin, and this renovation of your natures to holiness, yet it is not the thing itself, it is not the real spiritual blessing; nor does this divine blessing always attend it; and it is often administered to persons who are never truly regenerate, who never have this divine change or purification passing upon them.

* See Dr. Calamy on Moderate Nonconformity, Vol. *II.* p. 131.

You lie therefore under the strongest obligations to see to it, that you have better evidences of regeneration than your *mere baptism with water:* You are bound by your own principles to seek this divine change of your heart, this spiritual and important blessing with the utmost care, diligence, devotion and prayer. You are exhorted in the ministry of the word to labour with your own hearts to convince them of the evil of sin, of the beauty and necessity of holiness, of the excellency of true religion and the divine life; to impress your spirits by all proper motives, that they may repent of all sin, that your will may be turned away from it with hatred; that your love, and fear, and hope may be fixed upon better objects than they are by nature, even upon God and Christ, and things spiritual and eternal: You are frequently called upon to strive and seek, that your inward disposition of soul toward your neighbour may be kind, and just, and faithful, such as God requires; that you may be delivered from the power of sin reigning in you, and that you may be reformed and made fit for the business and blessedness of heaven, *where nothing shall enter that defileth.* You are exhorted and obliged to pray earnestly to God for the assistance of his Spirit in this divine work, *for unless we are born of the Spirit, as well as washed with water, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God;* John iii. 3, 5, 6. Now, has this been your solemn care? Has this been your zealous desire, and the matter of your labour with your own heart in secret, and of your fervent prayer to God? Do you *give yourselves no rest* till you find such a charge wrought in your souls, whereby you are become new creatures, whereby you hate every thing that is offensive to God, and love and delight in the practice of your duty toward God and man? What clear and convincing evidences have you that you have entered into this new state, and obtained this divine blessing? That instead of being *a child of sin and wrath (as you are by nature) you are become a child of grace, and a son or daughter of the Most High God?*

Again, as you profess this doctrine of inward regeneration, and the necessity of it in order to eternal life, do you take due care to impress the sense of it on your children? Do you let them know, that though they are baptized with water, which is designed to be a type or figure of regenerating grace, and of your duty of purification from sin, yet this is not a sufficient evidence of it, unless they find that their hearts are inwardly changed? Do you inform them at proper seasons, and by all gentle and convincing means, that they are early sinners before God, that their hearts and lives are corrupt and unholy, that washing with water can never make them christians any farther than a bare profession goes, that *they must be born again,* i. e. they must become *new creatures,* and have their hearts and inclinations, and desires and passions, altered from what they are in a sinful state, and formed unto holiness, if ever they would be saved? *John* iii. 3.

What profit is it to yourselves or your children to avoid this unhappy mistake of inward regeneration by baptismal water, if you never concern yourselves to seek after such a real divine change of heart and life, in yourselves or in them, as may make it appear that you are born again? What advantage is it to your offspring to guard them from this error, if you never take care to convince them of their corrupt nature and sinful inclinations? If you never teach them plainly that it is their duty to be converted, and turn from sin to God, and beseech them earnestly to set about the work of conversion with all holy diligence? What signifies it to keep them from this mistake about regeneration, if you never pray for them, nor teach them to pray for themselves, *that God would renew their hearts by his Spirit,* that he would work this glorious and divine change in them, that he would really *translate them out of the family of Satan, and make them his sons and his daughters?*

What! do you take care to let them know that the outward washing of baptism does not, cannot make them really the children of God, members of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and yet have you no solicitude, nor take pains to shew them, how they may become the children of God, and inheritors of his kingdom? Do you let them grow up from the day of their baptism, wherein the figure and emblem of renewing grace passed upon them, until they are become men and women, without ever instructing and exciting them to seek after the substance of this heavenly blessing? Fathers, mothers, elder kindred, do you never concern yourselves that your children should obtain this divine favour, and give good evidence of the work of the renewing Spirit of God in them, by a holy behaviour and a heavenly conversation? It is but a poor pretence for separating from the established church, that you or your children are in danger of being led into mistaken opinions there, if you are not deeply solicitous that both they and you may avoid the mischief as well as the error, and that you practise as well as learn the truth.

But leaving this mistake about baptism, there is another thing also wherein you protestant dissenters are free from the danger of taking up with outward forms instead of spiritual blessings, and that is the ceremony of confirmation.* You have no such rite performed among you as the solemn imposition of the hand of the bishop on your head, to become a token or sign of the favour of God toward you, as is found in the offices of the established church. See the office of confirmation in the common prayer. *So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say in their mother tongue their creed, and Lord's-prayer, and the ten commandments, and also can answer to other questions of this short catechism, they shall be brought to the bishop. And every one shall have a godfather or a godmother as a witness of their confirmation.* Then the first prayer begins, *Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins, &c.* And in a following collect the bishop says—*These thy servants upon whom (after the example of thy holy apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them.* But you declare to the world, that you cannot find that God has given to his ministers any such authority to certify persons of the favour and gracious goodness of God towards them, by any such sign as this. But since you reject this sign, are you not bound then to enquire what surer signs you have of the favour and love of God to you? What better inward tokens and evidences have you that you are the children of God, and partakers of his favour?

You complain that the public liturgy tempts children to believe they are regenerated or born again, and made members of Christ and children of God in baptism, which dangerous opinion is also repeated in the office of confirmation;† and you complain that they are farther confirmed in this mistake when the bishop lays his hand upon their head to certify them by this sign of the favour of God; are you careful then to teach your children, and to enforce it upon their consciences, that they must seek after better signs of regeneration and of the divine favour, even the graces of faith and love, and the exercise of universal holiness in heart and life? What a vain imagination is it, what an idle pretence to guard against the dangers of mistaking the imposition of the hand of a man

* See Dr. Calamy on Moderate Nonformity, Vol. II. page 271.

† This mistake is still more confirmed and established by the office of burial, wherein every baptised person, except the self-murderers and the excommunicated, has his body committed to the dust *in sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life*, and is called a dear brother or sister, and thanks are given for God's taking their souls to himself, how wicked soever their lives have been.

for a certain sign of the favour of God, unless you instruct your household what are the true and undoubted signs of his favour? Unless you persuade them to all holy diligence, in securing and maintaining such evidences of converting grace and the love of God, as God himself has prescribed, such as God will approve of, and such as will stand the test in the day of judgment?

II. Another advantage that you protestant dissenters have towards your improvement in true religion, and in acceptable service to God, is, that *you are freed from the inventions of men, and from the impositions and incumbrances of human ceremonies in divine worship.** There need be no proof of the imposition of such rites in the established church, since the preface to the common-prayer book confesses they have been devised by man, and yet it is thought good to reserve them still. But you, my friends, are required to practise nothing in the worship of God but what you take to be his own pure institutions.

It has pleased God in his providence, and it hath pleased our late and present rulers, in their great goodness and justice, to give you freedom from these human appointments, and to permit you to worship God in a way more agreeable to his own word and to your own consciences: The question of my text then returns upon you, *What are you better* than they who submit to them, *what do you more* than they? Do you never content yourselves with mere forms of godliness? Are you more spiritual in the service of your Creator, and more careful to practise every appointment of God, since you are disengaged from the appointments of men? Are your spirits more warmly engaged in spiritual things? Are you more zealous in your devotion? Have you the fear of God more constantly before your eyes, and the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ working more powerfully in your hearts? Say, my friends, while your outward worship is more uncorrupted with a mixture of human forms, have you more of the divine power and inward life of religion? And while you make the Bible the only and the perfect rule of your faith and practice, are you more careful to observe all the duties of christianity which the Bible recommends, than those who join the additional inventions of men with them in their religious performances?

Alas! what will all your pretences to greater purity in the outward forms of worship avail you, if you are not more pure and more advanced in the spiritual parts of piety and religion than your neighbours? You will give occasion to others severely to upbraid you, and that with some appearance of reason too, that you really stand in need of these outward forms to assist you; that you want these rites and ceremonies to stir up your dull minds to the remembrance of your duty to God, by their notable and spiritual signification, which is the very reason given for the use and continuance of them in the preface to the common-prayer. Unless you are more religious and holy without these forms than they are with them, they will fling your pretence of separation for the sake of greater purity back upon your faces with huge and deserved reproaches. *What! are you the persons who profess to cleave only to the pure ordinances of God's appointment? Do you abandon and renounce our ceremonious outward forms as though they were carnal, unclean and unholy, and yet shamefully neglect the inward, the spiritual, and more necessary parts of true religion and godliness?* And how will you be able to answer such sharp and righteous rebukes? Shall I be permitted to mention two or three of these ceremonies upon this

* See Dr. Calamy's Introduction to his Second Volume of Moderate Nonconformity.

occasion, that I may awaken and excite you thereby to various duties, and warn you against a neglect of them.

1. You have not the divine ordinance of baptism encumbered amongst you, with the human addition of the sign of the cross to be made on the forehead of the child,* which is appointed by the church *as a token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil.* You renounce this ceremony of the cross; but do you remember a crucified Saviour, and let him dwell upon your thoughts more than they do who make use of it? Are you more courageous and manful in the profession of the gospel in a dangerous hour? Are you less ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified in the company of infidels, or manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, than they? Do you teach your children these duties, and shew the necessity of practising them without the assistance of this figure made on their foreheads? Shall we not give our brethren of the established church occasion to charge us with hypocrisy for being so much offended at such a sign of the cross, which they use to put themselves and their children in mind of Christ crucified, if they see us negligent of the name, the doctrines, and the honours of a crucified Saviour? Let us make it appear then to the world that we are faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ without this human badge of distinction; shew your neighbours that you can fight with courage and glory under his banner against sin and Satan, without having passed under the figure of the cross in baptism, and that you stand in no need of the additional ceremonies of men to put you or your children in mind of your duty to the Son of God.

2. You are not required to provide godfathers and godmothers for your children in baptism, who are called sureties,† by which the infant professes to *renounce the devil and all his works, and to believe God's holy word and keep his commandments.* You are ready to imagine that the promises of these sureties arise so high, as to give parents too much indulgence and excuse for their own personal neglect of the instruction of the child, especially when the parent himself is not permitted to become a surety.

You who separate from the church of England do not think it needful or proper to have any sponsors, nor do you provide any such sureties for your children, and thereby you appear to lay yourselves under a strong and public obligation to educate them yourselves in the fear of God and in the faith of Christ. Now the question addressed to your consciences is this, Do you take more care in the pious and christian education of your offspring, than your brethren or neighbours of the parish, who have provided sureties to supply their own absence or defect? Are you more diligent and more solicitous to see your children brought up in *the knowledge of the true God,* and in acquaintance with Christ Jesus the Saviour? Are you more careful to inform them betimes of their duties to God and their duties to men, and to train them up in all the necessary and important doctrines and practices of the true religion? Surely your brethren of the established church will have abundant reason to reprove and censure you, who renounce the aid of sureties in the education of your children, and yet take so little care of them yourselves.

* See Dr. Calamy on Moderate Nonconformity, Vol. II. page 179. Vol. III. p. 67. Lay Nonconformity Justified, page 29.

† See Dr. Calamy on Modern Nonconformity, Vol. II. page 147, 169. Vol. III. page 66. Lay Nonformity Justified, page 27.

O cruel and profane parents! where is your tenderness? where your bowels of affection? How strangely and wickedly careless are you of the immortal interests of your own offspring, and the interest of God in them? Have you not devoted them to God and Christ in baptism, and yet neither teach them yourselves the way to the favour of God by Jesus Christ, nor make any provision for your neighbours to do it for you? You will be condemned by the world and the church, you will be condemned by all your neighbours and by your own children, and you will be terribly condemned by your own consciences, and by Jesus, the Judge of mankind, if you neglect this sacred work, or do it in so formal and trifling a manner as can have little or no effect on the hearts and consciences of your offspring.

3. Shall I take one step farther, and mention the appointment of kneeling at the Lord's-supper,* which is acknowledged to be an human institution, and not required in scripture. It must be granted, that the church of England, by a solemn caution, declares plainly *that no adoration of the elements is intended thereby;* nor do I enter here into the enquiry how far it is lawful or convenient, but it is certain that it offends the consciences of many of you, who cannot think that any other posture is proper for the receiving of this sacrament, than that of eating and drinking at a table, in which posture it was instituted. But the question that my text would address to your consciences on this occasion is this: Are you as humble and as devout at this sacred solemnity, while you neglect this outward sign of humility, as your brethren are who practise it? Are you more penitent and self-abased under a sense of your sins, and more thankful for the condescending love of Jesus, the Son of God, who came and died to save you? Have you as great a reverence for *the blood of Christ, which was shed for the remission of sins,* and do you adore God and the Saviour with a more contrite spirit and a warmer zeal? Do you partake of these sacred emblems of *the body and blood of Christ* with a most profound respect to him? Otherwise you will give your neighbours just reason to reprove and censure you, that you neglect at once the outward forms and the inward duty; that you renounce the posture of humble worship, and forget the spiritual practice of it; that you have need to be roused from your seats at the table of the Lord, and be brought down upon your knees to confess your want of devotion and honour to the Son of God, and your want of humility and religious gratitude for his inestimable benefits. In vain you pretend scruples about the posture of your knees, if your hearts are not found in a very devout and adoring frame at so solemn a season.

But give me leave to make a further enquiry. While some of you profess to be displeased with kneeling at the Lord's-supper, because it is performing such an institution of Christ in a gesture, which he has not instituted, do you think you are less criminal who never perform this duty at all, which our Lord and Saviour has so expressly instituted and commanded? Is this a proper way to shew your reverence for the body and blood of Christ, to abstain entirely from the appointed emblems and tokens of them? Will you dare to tell Jesus the Lord, upon his throne of judgment, that you were offended with your brethren, who kneeled down to worship him while they eat his bread and drank his wine, and partook of the feast to which he has called them; and yet that you dared from year to year, for twenty or thirty years together, to neglect this sacred feast entirely, and turn your backs upon this gracious ordinance? Can you imagine that

* Dr. Calamy on Moderate Nonconformity, Vol. II. page 197. and Vol. III. page 68. Lay Nonconformity Justified, page 31.

you please him better by utterly refusing the remembrance of the death of Christ at his supper, than they do who remember him at his table in a mistaken posture? Can you ever persuade your own consciences, that you who never comply with the tenderest pledges and memorials of his love, and reject his dying commandment, are better christians than they who practise this sacred duty with a mistaken gesture of humble worship, while they are called and invited to sit around this table? *Examine yourselves*, my friends, you that have never yet sealed a covenant with God the Father by the blood of Christ at his table, what are the true reasons of this neglect? Is it not sloth and negligence in spiritual things? Is it not a very shameful indolence about matters of religious importance? Is it not an unwillingness to make open profession of the cross of Christ, and to bind yourselves more publicly to all the practices of strict christianity and godliness? Converse over these enquiries with your own hearts, and let your own consciences determine, whether you are not vastly more to blame in neglecting to honour Christ in such an ordinance, appointed with his dying breath, than your brethren of the church of England, who conscientiously and devoutly practise this command of Christ, though it is in the posture of adoration, instead of the posture of communion at a feast; and let your own reproof awaken and shame you out of your guilty negligence. I mention no more the incumbrance of human ceremonies, but to proceed immediately to the third advantage for the increase of piety, which you suppose you enjoy amongst the protestant dissenters, and raise some serious enquiries upon it.

III. *You are not confined to a perpetual repetition of set forms of prayer in your public worship.** This has been one ground of your disapprobation of the parochial worship of the nation. Some of yourselves, and your fathers before you, who have attended divine service there, have complained much, that coldness and indifferency of spirit and formality are ready to be introduced into your devotion by this means; and that your hearts are apt to grow dull, negligent, and drowsy, under this uniform and constant rehearsal of the same returning forms and phrases, especially considering that the minister is not suffered to omit any one appointed line in the book, though he thinks it never so improper; nor is he permitted to add or insert one new sentence in the midst of his collect, though never so many devout sentiments and petitions should arise in his mind while he is reading it, and though these petitions appear to him never so suitable to the present time, and place, and congregation.

God forbid that I should say or think that forms of prayer are sinful things, or improper for our assistance! nor indeed am I so zealous against forms, as to imagine that a pre-composed liturgy, in the main distinct parts of worship, confession, or petition, would be unlawful to be used. The directory of the assembly of divines at Westminster comes pretty near to such a design, still supposing that there be liberty for the minister to omit or add, to change and vary according to present occasion, and that he have leave to express a warm devout thought which is upon his heart, and that he is not constrained to forbid and suppress those pious sentiments and desires which may be hoped to be the motions of the good Spirit of God in prayer. I never imagined that well-composed forms of prayer might not be used with such a liberty, and assist the real devotion of well-disposed minds either at home or at church. It is my opinion, they may be so managed

* See Dr. Calamy's Moderate Nonconformity Vol. III. pages 100, 105. Lay Nonconformity Justified, page 19.

as to become a happy means to promote true religion in the hearts even of wise and advanced christians as well as children and weaker persons. I am verily persuaded that there are many holy souls address the God of heaven in a variety of prayers that are precomposed, and find spiritual improvement thereby. There are many devout minds who continually worship him in an acceptable manner, even in these forms of words, and that not only in public, but in their families also. And yet I cannot help thinking with you, that this method of worship, if there be a confinement to the constant repetition of one and the same form, has naturally some tendency to pass over the ears without due impressions on the heart, and to leave the worshipper under a coldness and indifference of spirit, which would be greatly relieved by a larger variety of sentiments and expressions in the public worship of every Lord's-day.

May I be permitted here to cite a few lines from the ingenious writings of the late Marquis of Halifax, who being a courtier in the reign of the two brothers, King Charles and James II. can never lie under the suspicion of being a dissenter. This noble writer, in a little book under a borrowed character, gives us his own sentiments of things. He tells us, that *he is far from relishing the impertinent wanderings of those who pour out long prayers upon the congregation, and all from their own stock, too often a barren soil, which produces weeds instead of flowers, and by this means they expose religion itself, rather than promote men's devotion: On the other side, there may be too great a restraint put upon men whom God and nature have distinguished from their fellow-labourers, by blessing them with a happier talent, and by giving them not only good sense, but a powerful utterance too; this has enabled them to gush out upon the attentive auditory with a mighty stream of devout and unaffected eloquence. When a man so qualified, endued with learning too, and above all, adorned with a good life, breaks out into a warm and well-delivered prayer before his sermon, it has the appearance of a divine rapture; he raises and leads the hearts of the assembly in another manner than the most composed or best studied form of set words can ever do; and the* Pray we's, *who serve up all their sermons with the same garnishing, would look like so many statues, or men of straw in the pulpit, compared with those who speak with such a powerful zeal, that men are tempted at the moment to believe heaven itself has dictated their words to them.*

But I recall myself from running out too largely on this point. My present business is to enquire of you, my friends, how stands the case with your spirits in public worship, who are not confined to the weekly rehearsal of these religious forms? What do you more than others? Are you more lively in the freer addresses of your souls to heaven without a confinement to set words and phrases? Are your spirits more humble, and your devotional thoughts in warmer exercise, while you are adoring the great and blessed God in a larger variety of language? Are your hearts more deeply affected with a sense of sin in your free confessions? Are you more fervent while you join in your petitions for pardoning mercy, for sanctifying grace, for deliverance from temptations, and assistance to perform duty? Are your spirits more importunate in pleading at the throne of grace? Is your love and gratitude more exalted in our more unconfined methods of thanksgiving and praise? Does your zeal and joy rise higher in blessing the name of the Lord your God, and Jesus your Saviour? In a word, are you more devout and spiritual in the house of prayer? Are you more free from that dulness, that indifference, that formality which you complain of, and which you profess to fear under the use of a constant form? If you

content yourselves with cold and lazy devotions, with thoughtless or wandering hearts in the place of worship, under those free ministrations which you desire for your greater advantage, your complaints and pretences against the established forms of the nation will hardly be excused from the charge of vain and insincere; and you may expect a severe reproof from the judgment-seat of Christ. *Where are all your pretences to the life, and power, and spirit of devotion, while you have not been restrained to the use of a single form? What have you done in the house of prayer more than those who have not enjoyed your advantages?*

IV. You not only worship God in your own chosen way, *but you have the choice of your own ministers also.* You join yourselves to what worshipping congregation you please, whether it be within the bounds of your own parish or no; and you are not confined to sit under such teachers as some rich patron shall choose and provide for you:* And it is a melancholy thought, that too often a country parish is furnished with a preacher whom the patron chooses as the fittest companion for himself, and whose character in the main is not much superior to that of the patron either in the love of learning, in piety or virtue. And let it be numbered among your advantages for edification also, that however difficult it may be for a parish to get rid of an ill minister, yet your congregations have power to dismiss your ministers, if they prove immoral and scandalous, if they grow intolerably imperious and assuming, or shamefully contentious; if they become grossly negligent of the great work of their ministry, and continue so after all due admonition; if they be known to fall into gross and dangerous errors, and will publish them in opposition to the common sense and sentiments of the people; and such dismissions are sometimes practised among you, where just occasions have risen, and that without long and vexatious processes at law: So that you are not obliged to sit under the preaching of persons of a blemished character, or who are unqualified for the sacred work, or who are utterly unprofitable to your edification.

Well then, my friends, if you have not such public ministrations as edify and profit your souls, it is in a great measure your own fault, since you sit under such a ministry as you choose. One would presume that you hear their messages of holy things with satisfaction and delight. But while you enjoy this privilege, enquire of your own consciences, What have you profited more than others? Do your souls find a greater increase in knowledge, and in the power of godliness? Do you treasure up more of their words in your heart, and receive them with *faith and love* so far as they are agreeable to the word of God? Do you feed and live upon the sermons you hear? Do you attend on their messages of truth or duty with holy joy, and make them the food and support of your spirits? If you choose the person, and are pleased with the performances of him who ministers, it is a very considerable step toward profiting by his ministry. The word methinks should glide more easily into the heart, and have a powerful sway and influence on the conscience, when it is received from the man we love to hear: And indeed what sort of sermons can you ever hope to profit by, if not by the preaching of those whom yourselves have chosen? You have plainly this advantage above your neighbours, but is your improvement greater than theirs? But if we enter into particulars on this subject, we shall find that your advantages are more considerable even in your own

* See Moderate Nonconformity, Vol. III. p. 61, 154. Lay Nonconformity Justified, p. 5.

esteem, arising from the character and qualifications of the ministers whose labours you choose to attend, and from the way and manner of their preaching.*

It was the general desire of your fathers, and it is still for the most part your desire and endeavour to sit under such a ministry, as not only preaches the law, to *convince you of sin*, and to direct you to the several duties you owe to God and man, but which leads you into a sense of your degeneracy and ruin by the fall of Adam, and your impotence to restore yourselves; and gives you a large acquaintance with the methods of divine grace in the gospel, and the benefits of *the new covenant*, recovering you from your guilty and sinful state by the sacrifice and death of Christ, and enabling you, by his spirit, to perform the several duties prescribed. You desire such preachers as display the various glories of Christ in his sacred offices of a Mediator and High-priest, a King and a Judge, and lead you to practise all the divine, social, and personal virtues, by evangelical motives and evangelical assistances, as well as by the principles and obligations of the light of nature, and who insist frequently upon the peculiar themes of christianity and divine revelation.†

Now permit me to make the enquiry in my text. Those of you who do sit under such ministrations as you desire in this respect, *What do you more than others?* Are your souls more evangelical, more truly christian than your neighbours? Have you more of the temper and spirit of the gospel wrought into your very hearts and inward powers? Do you love Christ Jesus the Lord, and live upon him by daily faith and dependance, more than they who do not hear of him so often as you? Are you brought nearer to the throne of God, in more frequent and delightful performance of the duty of prayer, and in more humble, holy, and intimate converse with God; you who hear so much of Jesus Christ, *the High-priest*, of *atonement* and *intercession*, and of his readiness to bring you into the favour and presence of God? Do you hate sin more than your neighbours, since you are so often taught what it cost the Son of God to redeem you from it? Is the frame of your spirit and the course of your life more agreeable to the divine pattern that the holy Jesus has set you, and to the strict rules of his religion? You who are taught more of the ruin and impotence of nature, and the necessity of divine grace, are you more self-abased under a sense of your degeneracy and weakness, and do you seek the assistances of the Spirit of God with more importunity and holy fervours of devotion, that he may subdue sin, and raise you to higher degrees of holiness? What use do you make of the spiritual and evangelical preaching which you profess to attend upon, if the great ends of the gospel of Christ are not attained in and upon you, if you do not honour him more than others, if you are not made more like him, more holy and blameless before him?

Examine yourselves strictly, my friends, are you so watchful, so exact in all the virtues of *temperance, sobriety, justice, truth, faithfulness, charity, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness*, and all instances of *brotherly love*, as becomes those that profess much acquaintance

* Let it be observed here, that different nations and ages, and parties of christians, have their peculiar way and manner in preaching. The primitive fathers and the moderns have very different fashions. The Germans and French, the English and Scots, the Coccceians and Voetians among the Dutch, the Arminians and Calvinists, the ancient Puritans and the zealous Churchmen of that day, the present Conformists and the Nonconformists, have their different manners partly in composing and partly in delivering their sermons: Nor is it strange that the protestant dissenters should think the way practised among them preferable to any other, and of more advantage toward their salvation.

† See Lay Nonconformity Justified, p. 16, 17.

with the blessed Jesus, whose soul was divine truth and love, and whose life was all virtue, and piety, and goodness in perfection? Do you never give occasion to your neighbours to reproach yourselves and your ministers together, that *you practise so little morality, because you hear so little of it preached?* Have you not by this means exposed the preaching of the name of Christ to scandal, and the glorious doctrines of the gospel to infamy, as though they indulged the hearers of them in licentious practices?

Your own consciences must bear witness that we have endeavoured to declare amongst you *the whole counsel of God*, and neither kept back the doctrines nor the duties which our Lord has sent us to publish to men: We have taught you, that the great design of all the glorious transactions of God and Christ for your salvation, is, *that you might be holy and without blame before him in love;* Eph. i. 3, 4. We have assured you, *that the grace of God which brings salvation to men, teaches you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and religiously;* and if you are purchased *to be a peculiar people to God* by the blood of his Son, it is, that you might *be zealous of good works;* Tit. ii. 11, 12, 14. Have you ever felt the influence of the dying love and the redeeming blood of Christ, softening and melting your hearts into a sincere sorrow for sin, and holy desires to love God, and be made like him? Has the gospel (which you yourselves profess to be so much a better spring of holiness than natural religion can furnish you with), has this gospel had its proper, and powerful, and sanctifying effects on your hearts and on your lives? Do you behave with so much more honour, justice, and goodness amongst men, and with so much more piety toward God as your advantage requires? You who have so often the great and evangelical motives of the life and love, the example, the sacrifice and the death of Christ set before you in public worship, has your love to God and man grown fervent in proportion to such persuasives? How dreadful will your case be, if after all pretences to an evangelical ministry, you disgrace the gospel of Christ in the ministrations of it, by intemperate, immoral, or irreligious lives? If you have better helps to holiness and virtue, according to your own sentiments, than others enjoy, let your consciences never be satisfied till your heart and life be reformed and purified in proportion to your professed advantages, lest you make Christ *the minister of sin*, and lest the preachers of a crucified Christ be exposed by your means as the licensers of unrighteousness.

Again, you profess to choose such a ministry as not only informs the minds in general of the truths and duties of christianity, but makes a particular search and enquiry into souls and consciences, and teaches the hearers by evidences and characters drawn from the word of God to examine and judge of themselves and their own state and case: You like such preaching best as enters into the various turnings of the heart of man, and unfolds and discovers the subtle workings of sin in the soul, and its manifold disguises to conceal itself from *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* You expect to hear your ministers address themselves distinctly to *persons of various characters;* to direct their discourse sometimes to the indolent and thoughtless sinner, or the conceited and presumptuous soul, in order to rouse them out of their security, and to thunder upon the sleepy consciences of men who speak *a false peace to themselves*, and awaken them to a sight of their mistake, and their infinite peril. You expect your ministers would sometimes enter into the particular case of *convinced and awakened souls*, and treat with them about their important and everlasting interests, and put them upon most earnest enquiries about the way to be saved; that we should assist them in their spiritual

conflicts amidst all their budding hopes, and their blasting fears, in all the pious and secret jealousies of their own hearts, their doubts and complaints, their holy desires and trembling tendencies toward God and Christ, and salvation; and that we should direct the doubtful foot where to tread, and the doubtful eye where to look for peace and pardon, for light and strength, for holiness and eternal life. You delight to hear your preachers sometimes mention the case of *the afflicted and the tempted*, who are engaged in a hard combat with their spiritual adversaries, with the powers of sin within them, and temptation without them, and you wait to hear us give the feeble and the oppressed some proper advice and encouragement. You expect we should at other times take the case of the *backsliders* in hand, and prepare a word of admonition and reproof for those that decline from the good degrees of religion which once they professed and practised; that we should *strengthen the feeble*, the humble and the fearful christian, and pass through the various parts of spiritual experience, and the several scenes and stages of the christian life. Surely this was the fashion and practice of our fathers amongst the puritans and protestant dissenters in their ministry: I hope this is the present mode of preaching amongst us, and I wish with all my soul this sort of ministration, this manner of *dividing the word of God, and giving to each their due*, may never grow out of fashion in our places of worship.

But my business is to apply this matter closely to your consciences: Under all these advantages, as you suppose, of experimental preaching, do you live any better than your neighbours? Have you learnt more of the christian life in the various parts of it than they have done? Are you more acquainted with the particular state and case of your own souls toward God? Have you traced out the frame of your own spirit, or are you more solicitous to find it? Can each of you tell where to rank yourselves? Are you mere nominal Christians, or real followers of Christ? Are you among the secure and presumptuous, or the awakened and convinced? Are you among the irresolute, the doubtful and wavering christians, or among those who run the race of holiness with a steadiness and establishment of soul? Are you daily growing in the things of God, or do you belong to the class of backsliders in heart and ways? Have you observed the directions that have been given to persons under these different characters? Have you made such a proficiency in religion hereby, as to answer the designs of those ministrations and labours in the pulpit under which you have placed yourselves? It is in vain for you to pretend to have enjoyed such a manner of preaching, as is most suited to bring souls onward from a state of sin and nature to a state of grace, and advancing toward glory, if you yourselves remain still in a state of sin, and are strangers to divine grace; or if you have never applied the distinguishing evidences of formal professors and sincere converts, so as to learn where to rank yourselves.

Yet once more give me leave to put you in mind, that you generally profess to desire such a ministry as not only instructs the head, but strikes the heart in a powerful and affecting manner; you delight to hear your ministers, in the application of their discourses, speak with life and zeal, like messengers who are sent from God to sinners on an errand of everlasting importance: You love to hear them address the consciences of their auditory in such a serious, a penetrating, and a persuasive style and manner, as becomes persons who are in good earnest, who feel the power of the words which they speak, and who are resolved, if possible, to reach the hearts of the assembly, and to save the souls of men from hell by the concurrent influence of the grace of God.

But then, my friends, if you choose such a ministry, and suppose that you enjoy any such advantages, what have you profited thereby more than others? Do you frequent places of worship where there are such awakening, fervent and persuasive ministrations, and why are you not more remarkably reformed, and more eminently religious? Why are you not more effectually convinced of the evil of sin and the danger of eternal wretchedness under the wrath of God? Why are you not all more powerfully persuaded to *break off your sins by repentance, to cry out what shall I do to be saved? to fly for refuge to the only hope,* to receive Jesus the Saviour in all his blessed offices, to resign your souls to his care and grace and government, and devote yourselves to him for ever? Why are you so cold, so indifferent in the practice of the duties of piety and virtue, which are so warmly recommended to you? What! is all the fervour of the pulpit lost upon you? Do the words die on your ears, and never reach your souls? Why are you so unaffected with the important and eternal things of the invisible world, which are set before you in the ministry with some zeal and affection? What will you say for your own defence, when some of your brethren and neighbours of the established church, who have sat all their days under that which you suppose to be a less affecting ministry, shall have their hearts awakened and warmed with the great and awful scenes of religion more than you? How will you answer it to your final Judge, if he shall find their souls have been drawn near to God, and engaged in the lively exercises of faith and love and every grace, and yet you yourselves who profess to enjoy superior advantages shall be found cold triflers and mere formalists in religion? A dreadful sentence awaits such sinners from the tribunal whence there is no appeal. Thus I have finished the fourth advantage which you who worship God in separate assemblies, profess to enjoy above your brethren of the church of England, *viz.* you choose your own ministers, and put yourselves under the preaching and the pastoral care of such persons as you yourselves best approve and think most adapted to the salvation of souls.

V. Another advantage which you who worship God in separate assemblies, are supposed to have above your brethren of the church of England, is this, that *the communion of your churches is kept more pure and free from unworthy and scandalous members, by the exercise of proper discipline in the care that is taken about the admission to the Lord's table, and in excluding the ignorant and the vicious from your special fellowship.* When a communicant in any of your congregations grows vicious or profane, and it appears so by evident proof, he is at least privately admonished to abstain from the holy communion, or plainly forbid to attend on it: And in some of our congregations he is more solemnly cast out of the church, as unworthy to partake of so holy an institution as the table of our blessed Lord: Nor is he received again until he hath professed serious repentance, and hath behaved himself for some space of time as a penitent, and a person thoroughly reformed. Now where such discipline is maintained in christian congregations, this remarkable advantage is obtained by it, that all vicious practices are most evidently and powerfully discouraged by the exclusion of criminals from the church. If such a person be found among us, he is *shunned that he may be ashamed: The pious communicants have no company with him,* besides what is necessary and cannot be avoided. This is perfectly agreeable to the directions of the apostle. Some construe those words of St. Paul into this sense; in 2 Thess. iii. 16. *Now we command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you withdraw yourselves from every brother*

which walketh disorderly: But in 1 *Cor.* v. 9—11. the sense is stronger, and more evident; *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators, &c. but now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man who is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.* Whether this eating refer to the religious feast of the Lord's-supper, or whether to the common entertainments of the table, may perhaps be doubted by interpreters; but this inference is certain, that if the apostle forbids familiar society with persons of this character at our common repast, much more are we forbid to hold communion in the sacred feast with persons of such a character. Surely the table of the Lord should be guarded and kept as pure as our own tables. The churches of Christ are and should be separate and distinguished from the world; they should have as little chosen and voluntary society as may be with *the wicked of the earth*, and especially in holy things, that they may keep up a more venerable character and reputation of the gospel in the world, and of the obligations that lie upon those that profess christianity to be strictly religious: They are called to *separate themselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, to come out from among the wicked and profane, that they may be a peculiar people to the Lord.*

It is true, this cannot be practised universally and perfectly in any visible churches of Christ here on earth, because we are bound to judge by the sensible appearances of things: And those who have the visible marks of christianity in the knowledge and profession of the faith of Christ, and whose conversation in the world is sober and pious to all outward appearance, may claim a place in any christian church and in the peculiar rites and ordinances of the gospel: And upon this account there may be some secret sinners who make their way into our separate congregations, and join with us in the most solemn ordinances, though they are not really worthy of any room or place in the house of God: Yet common swearers and common drunkards, publicly vicious, riotous and unclean persons, and men of scandalous life, are never received amongst us to the holy fellowship of the supper or communion at the Lord's-table; therefore in this respect we hope our communion is tolerably pure, and such as the gospel requires.

And indeed it must be also confessed, that neither the rubric nor the rules of the church of England encourage such scandalous sinners to come to the table of the Lord: but there is very little obedience can generally be paid to these rules in the continual admission of all persons, as is practised now-a-days to this holy sacrament: there are very few ministers of our parishes who usually attempt to lay these bars against any persons, known or unknown, who have a mind to come: and where a minister of a tender and scrupulous conscience has endeavoured to put the rules of the rubric in practice against persons of vile and profane character, he has exposed himself to great difficulties and troubles, and to many hardships and vexatious suits; and especially if they who offer themselves to the communion, have wanted to qualify themselves at the table of the Lord, for an office at court or in the city, by land or by sea.* Well then, since you who assemble in separate places of worship, maintain and enjoy a purer communion in your churches, should you not be very zealous and solicitous, each of you for yourselves, that you are no dishonourable communicants at the holy sup-

* See Dr. Calamy on Moderate Nonconformity, Vol. III. p. 64, and Mr. Rastrick's account of his hardships in the church of England, and his becoming a Nonconformist, at the end of that volume, p. 8, &c. Lay Nonconformity Justified, p. 33.

per? that your consciences and your hearts are pure in the sight of God? that you *lift up pure hands* at his altar? And do you not feel this sacred engagement on your souls, to keep yourselves from the infection of evil company in the world, since you are not constrained to mingle with them in the church.

Enquire of yourselves, Who are your chosen and delightful companions among men? Is it with you as it was with David, who was *a companion of them that fear the Lord?* Psalm cxix. 63. Are *the saints, the excellent in the earth*, high in your esteem, and is your delight amongst them? *Psalm* xvi. 3. It is granted, and the apostle allows it, 1 *Cor.* v. 10. that if you would always avoid the company of the wicked and the profane, you must even almost *go out of the world*, because the world is so full of them; and in buying and selling, in the daily business and commerce of life, their presence and converse cannot be avoided: but he directs you to avoid them, as far as it may be done consistently with other duties. And the great question is, Who are the companions of your choice, and in whose society do you take the most agreeable satisfaction? Are the sons of vice and impiety your familiars and intimates? And while you profess your desire to be separated from them in the church, do you chuse to dwell much with them in the world? Does not such a conduct give too just an occasion to charge you with hypocrisy? What! cannot you bear to sit near the lewd and the profane, the drunkard or the swearer in the house of God, for fear of defiling yourselves with their communion, and yet can you delight in their company all the week, and take so much pleasure to meet them either in your own houses or in the houses of public resort, in taverns, in gay assemblies, at midnight clubs, and in seasons and places of extreme hazard to virtue? Can you take familiar delight in those who neither love God nor fear him in the world, while you exclude them from a place in the church? Is there no defilement to be taken but in the house of God? Is there no infection but at the sacrament? What strange sort of conduct is this? Ridiculous and inconsistent! And to what severe reproaches do you expose the protestant dissenters, with all their pretences to purer communion, while you make the company of known and profligate sinners your free choice and your daily delight?

VI. It may be reckoned among your advantages for strict religion and virtue, that *your whole conduct is strictly observed*, and your behaviour is watched with a narrow and severe eye by many of your neighbours of the established church, and especially by those of them that hate you: they are ready to take notice of every failing, and to make sharp remarks upon every defect you are guilty of in your duty to God or man. You cannot step awry, but censure and reproach attend you. If there should happen to be any persons in your societies for worship, who are a scandal to religion, you shall be sure to hear of it plentifully,* even though perhaps they are ejected out of your special communion: and this should awaken you to a double watch over yourselves, to a more constant and severe guard upon all your words and motions.

It is true, the eyes of God and angels are ever upon us all, and this ought to have the most awful influence on us, in order to secure us from every sin and folly: but it should also awaken you to a constant care of your whole conduct, when you remember that the eyes of men, and of some such as have no great kindness for you, are upon you too; and they are sharp and piercing to spy out every transgression, and to magnify

* Lay Nonconformity Justified, p. 17, 35, 43.

every instance of your departure from strict piety and virtue into a heinous crime and scandal. I confess this is no very pleasing circumstance and situation of life, to stand forth as a mark for every nice observer, to have every word and motion watched and critically remarked by an eye of jealousy or professed enmity: it is no pleasing circumstance indeed, but perhaps it is, or it should be, a profitable one; for it carries in it a constant spur to duty, a constant restraint upon sinful appetite, and a guard upon our whole behaviour.

And here I cannot but make mention of an observation which I have often made in the course of my life, *viz.* If a person who professes himself to belong to the established church is found guilty of swearing or cursing, if he drink to excess, if he prove false and deceitful in his dealing, if his character be vicious and lewd, and he indulge iniquities of the grosser kind; there is no such mighty matter made of it in the world, nor is the scandal of such a criminal thrown at all upon the church itself: We never hear it said upon such an occasion, These are the members of the church of England: But on the other hand, if a protestant dissenter, who attends constantly on the worship of God in our separate assemblies, and communicates with us, be guilty of any foul or infamous crime, what a loud clamour is raised in the town? What a noise spreads and echoes through the neighbourhood? And the name of the single offender is not only set up as a public mark for the reproach of the world, but the whole party of the dissenters falls under disgrace thereby; *These are your nonconformists; These are your saints; These are the men that pretend to godliness, and who do not think our church pure enough for them; See what hypocrites they are!* And thus they load the whole profession and party with the crime and scandal of a single sinner. Now surely the view and consideration of this situation of things, and this circumstance of your case, should make you all more watchful, more strictly religious toward God, more sober, temperate, and careful in the practice of all personal virtues, and more exactly righteous and honourable in all the affairs of the social life, that you may never suffer your foot to slide, nor give occasion to those who wait for your halting, to blaspheme the good ways of the Lord, wherein you profess to walk. You are called by providence to give double diligence, and walk more circumspectly in every station of life, since so many watchful eyes are ever upon you: It behoves you to keep a holy jealousy over yourselves, lest at any time you yield to temptation, that the whole body of the dissenters may not receive a wound and infamy through your misbehaviour.

SECTION IV.

OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS TO GREATER DEGREES OF HOLINESS.

Thus I have finished the first general head of this part of my discourse, which relates to the real or supposed advantages, that the protestant dissenters enjoy for their improvement in religion and virtue, above their brethren, their neighbours of the established church: I proceed now to the second general, and that is to set before you, What special obligations you lie under to practise higher degrees of piety and morality by the very profession of religion which you make in this way of nonconformity, and to enquire in the language of our Saviour, *What do you more than others*, you who have all the following bonds and engagements lying upon you from your own profession?

I. The most considerable and most universal reason why you profess to dissent from the established church, and to separate from them, is, *that you may make better improvements in religion than if you continued in their communion.* Most of you who spend any thoughts about the grounds of your separation, profess this to be your most general motive, that you may serve and worship God in a way more pleasing and acceptable to him, because you think it more agreeable to his own word; you hope to obtain greater communications of grace from him by waiting on him in a more exact conformity to his own appointments; you walk in this separate path, that you may make swifter advances in the christian life, and speed your course in the way to heaven.

And indeed if you divide yourselves from an established and national christian church without this design, I fear you will but deceive and disappoint your own souls in your separation. But on the other hand, if a holy care and solicitude to serve God more agreeably to his will, and a desire after higher attainments in your religion, be your real end and sincere intention; see then, that you make this appear by your growing piety, and your advancement in every grace? and let the world see and be convinced by the holiness of your practice, that you have chosen the right way to obtain your end, and that your pious purposes are not disappointed. See that you *lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets you;* and since you choose a different track, *run with double speed the race* of christianity *that is set before you; press forward* beyond your fellows, *toward the mark of your high and holy calling,* and take larger steps toward the prize. Do you not declare you are the children and followers of those who in the former age were called puritans, because of their profession of greater purity of life than their neighbours? Why then do you not with more zeal and solicitude avoid every degree of impurity and defilement! Why do you not *cleanse yourselves daily from every pollution of flesh and spirit* in a manner and measure answerable to your own profession? In all your religious duties be ye more devout; in the practice of every social and personal virtue be you superior to others; and let the transcendent degrees of your fear and love of God, and your goodness toward men, distinguish you if possible from your neighbours, as much as you are distinguished from your profest and public separation from their forms of worship.

Should any one have asked the disciples of Christ after they had attended a considerable time on his ministry in particular meetings, *on mountains, in desarts, and by the sea side;* I say, should any one have asked them, Why do you continue in this manner to follow after a new preacher, who has no approbation or countenance from men of figure and power in the established church, and who teaches you to renounce their human inventions and traditions? Surely they would say, it is because we hope to please our God better, and to honour him much more than the scribes or the priests, than the pharisees and their disciples do, or the bulk and multitude of the jewish nation: It is because we design and hope to make higher advances in virtue and piety than they: We would not expose ourselves to the inconveniences and difficulties, to the long travel, to the hardships and the reproaches that we sustain, if we could content ourselves with just so much righteousness and religion as the rest of the nation, or even the scribes and the common sort of preachers of the national church, and upon this argument we may suppose our Saviour partly to build his question in my text, *What do you more than others?*

And as this was the case of the disciples when they followed after Jesus, a new

teacher, and held their particular meetings often in separate places, so it is and will be generally the case of all honest and sincere persons in their religious separations from any established church whatsoever. What advantage is it they aim at in dissenting from others in their forms of national religion, if it be not that they hope to advance more in the valuable designs of sincere godliness, and better to secure to themselves the approbation and favor of God by their peculiar and separate methods of worship.

It is therefore a most important and reasonable question which I would put to your consciences and my own this day, What do we dissenters more than others, more than our brethren of the national establishment? Do we make it appear in our whole behaviour, that our hearts are more holy and more heavenly? Is our zeal for the honour of God warmer than theirs? Have we a greater detestation of those sins which are too much indulged among some of them? As we refuse to comply with the traditions of men, are we more exactly conformable to the laws of God and the rules of the gospel of Christ? Are we more sober and temperate, and watchful in our personal conduct? Do we practise superior goodness towards our fellow-creatures, and exceed others in the duties of justice, charity and love? Alas! my friends, let our pretences rise never so high, if we do not attain something of this eminence in religion, or at least zealously endeavour after it, we lose the noblest designs of our nonconformity, and disgrace the peculiar profession that we make in the sight of the world. If this be the thing we pretend to, why do we not better answer our pretences? Is there no other difference to be seen betwixt us and our neighbours of the church of England, but that once a week we turn our backs upon the parish church, and resolve to worship God in a separate place? Are we as vain, as thoughtless of religion throughout the week, as loose and sensual in our conversation as the rest of the world? And are we content it should be so? When we take such a distinct profession upon us, it is universally expected by heaven and earth, that we should distinguish ourselves by our shining virtues, as the fruits of this our profession. God, *the great and blessed God*, expects it of us; *Jesus the Judge of all* expects it of us; *the angels who are ministring spirits* in the lower world, and who behold our conduct expect it of us; our neighbours around us expect it at our hands; and our own consciences will tell us that they have expected it of us too. If we neglect to seek this chief end of our nonconformity, neither scripture nor reason, neither God nor Christ, nor men nor angels will approve of our conduct, nor will our own consciences speak approbation or peace to us in a wise and serious hour of review.

Before I leave this first head of argument, let me take hold of another topic, and argue with you further upon the foot of your profest separation. Consider the inconveniences and difficulties in some instances, and some seasons or occurrences of life to which you are exposed by this your practice: perhaps you meet with now and then a frown, a token of contempt, or a word of mockery and bitter reproach among your neighbours, upon the account of your profession; you are often called schismatics, and charged with dividing the church of Christ; and it is possible you lie under some disadvantages in trade and business in the world upon this account too, as well as it is sufficiently known that *you are excluded by certain laws from all offices of trust and profit in the nation merely for your nonconformity*. Besides this, there are some angry bigots in the world who hate you and your profession, and would blast you altogether, and would rejoice to root you out of the earth; though for the most part, I would hope these furious ene-

mies of yours are only such as are no friends to the present settlement of the crown in the illustrious family who possesses it, and are enemies to the happiness of this nation and the liberties of mankind: But however, it is certain there are many who envy and hate us, though we acknowledge it with gratitude, to the honour of our rulers, that they have so much equity and goodness as to withhold the hands of the sons of violence from persecuting and destroying us. It is certain that we are observed with an *evil eye*, we are sometimes bantered and ridiculed by evil tongues; we suffer many an opprobrious name, many a malicious sneer and insolent affront, because we cannot comply with some inventions of men, and dare to worship God in another manner than the chief part of the nation. Now shall we *suffer all these things in vain?* Gal. iii. 4. And indeed it is, and will be in vain, that we expose ourselves by our profession to these sufferings, if we have no recompence in acquiring greater degrees of virtue and goodness; in attaining firmer hopes and a surer interest in the favor of God, and the blessings of eternal concernment.

Awake, awake, my friends, and bethink yourselves a little: Do you not aim at something glorious and divine that will counterpoise all the evils you sustain? Awake, and let your character and your piety brighten upon the world, let your uncontested virtues shine among men, let them efface all the gloom and darkness that is thrown upon your names, and overpower the unrighteous scandal. What! shall we be cast out of all public offices, trusts and salaries as men unworthy of civil benefits and honours, and in many instances be retrenched as to the more private and common profits of this world, and yet content ourselves to obtain none of the treasures that relate to another world in the room of them? Shall we bear the scoffings of our neighbours, and be derided as fools and fanatics? Shall we be reviled as men of humour and hypocrisy, as *deceivers and false brethren*, and content ourselves to bear all these indignities in the present life, without gaining any thing by it with regard to grace and righteousness and the life to come? This would be to confirm the reproach of folly upon ourselves with a witness, and justify the world when they charge us with madness and fanaticism. What is there can bring our wisdom, or even our common sense into question more justly than such a foolish conduct, to profess and assume a character in this world which sensibly exposes us to loss and shame, and yet not so much as to seek after any recompence in the gains of true religion, in the rewards and honours of heaven, and the blessings of the world to come?

When our Saviour foretold his disciples, while they followed his ministry, that they should be *persecuted and hated of all men for his name's sake*, he encourages them to bear up under all these hardships, by promising them the favour of his Father, his own blessing, and a large reward in the heavenly world, John xv. 19, 20. *Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you*, xvi. 33.—*In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*, and *in me ye shall have peace.* Matt. v. 10—12. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you for my name's sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.* These are the promises which our great Redeemer made to support the spirits of his persecuted disciples; but it is always to be understood on this condition, that they maintained their character of exalted virtue as the disciples of the Holy Jesus, and in this view and prospect they were wise and

happy, notwithstanding all their sufferings. But does not your own reason tell you, it is a vain and ridiculous thing in you to expose yourselves to the unkindness of your neighbours, and the loss of your honour or peace in any degree, for the sake of separate forms of worship and religion, if you take no care to secure some superior blessings by your conduct, which will far overbalance all the mockery and ridicule, all the hatred and hardships you sustain? Is it not a very weak and senseless thing for any person to bear scandal and reproach for being a professor of strict religion in any form whatsoever, if he has nothing else to comfort him, but the mere manner, shape, and outward form of this strict religion? Will this empty form and shadow of nonconformity balance against the solid evils of poverty and real losses, against the bitter scoffs and jeers of an ungodly world? Is he not a fool in grain to take up with a despised and ridiculed profession and *form of godliness*, if he neglects the inward reality, the life and power of it, and the divine hopes and joys that belong to it, in order to support and recompense his sufferings? A hypocrite in any party or profession of religion has but a very unprofitable bargain at the foot and balance of the account; but to be a hypocrite amongst the dissenters is a degree of folly that wants a name, when he gets nothing by it but reproach and contempt in this world, and damnation in the other.

II. You profess by this your separation, that you dare to be singular in your place, and modes of worship, and in the ministration of holy things on which you attend; why then should you not dare to be singular in your behaviour, in the civil life among your neighbours, when any other rules of christianity call you to it; You practise the forms of religion in a singular manner with courage, and why should you not dare to practise all virtue and godliness with holy courage too in the face of a world, that is ashamed of inward and real religion, and almost ashamed of the appearances of it, unless it be in going to church?

To be singular in our manner of life, and distinguish ourselves from our neighbours, is no part of religion or virtue considered in itself; but there are many seasons that occur frequently, and which will occur in all ages of sinful mankind, wherein every one who is a servant of God, in any form or party, is called to practise singularity, and to distinguish himself from the vicious and irreligious world. Moses forewarns us of it in his early days, and lays down this rule in *Exodus* xxiii. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* The wicked of the earth will always *think it strange that you will not run with them to the same excess of riot;* 1 Peter iv. 4. Yet you are to remember, that you are *redeemed from this present evil world, that you might be a peculiar people to God, zealous of good works;* Gal. i. 10. Titus ii. 14. The people of God in every generation have been distinguished from a *world that lies in wickedness*, and our blessed Lord has most expressly foretold us in several places, that there must and will be a difference between the men of the world and his disciples. Now have you arrived at this holy fortitude bravely to maintain this distinction at every call of providence, and to shew yourselves with more zeal to be nonconformists to a wicked world, than to divide yourselves from your christian brethren, because of their different forms of worship?

When you are in company with profane sinners, who make a jest of the things of religion, and trifle with the sacred names of God and our Saviour, there is sometimes a fair occasion in providence, and a loud call of duty to stand up for the name and honour of God, and shew your zeal for religion among those who seem to have renounced it: When you are in the midst of infidels or apostates from the christian faith, it may be

sometimes proper to appear boldly in the vindication of the name of Jesus and his gospel: When you see profligate wretches wallowing in their iniquities, and sporting with things sacred, conscience will tell you sometimes it is your duty to bear your testimony for the authority of the law of God, and for the purity of manners among men: I will not say it is always a necessary duty; there are seasons when we should not *cast our pearls before swine,* where there is no probability of doing good to any person in the company, and where they will not *only trample upon holy things, but turn again and rend you;* Matt. vii. 6. Under this pretence we ought not to maintain an everlasting silence, and hear the name of God always blasphemed, and the gospel of Christ ridiculed, without any remonstrance or reproof.

If a churchman persuade you to come and worship God according to the parochial and public forms, perhaps you would shew yourself to be a dissenter, *i. e.* a separatist from the national worship and refuse to comply: Well then, *if sinners would entice* you to any wicked practice, or would draw you away or divert you from your present duty to God, to your family, to yourself or your neighbours, I am sure that is a season when you ought to shew yourself a christian, *i. e.* a separatist, from all that is sinful.

Singularity in our ways and forms of worship and separation from an established christian church, is so far from being a part of our religion considered in itself, that it would be generally criminal in us, if we did not think there was something in that church so defective, so irregular, or so imposing as to justify a separation in the sight of God. To be singular in any part of our behaviour from our brethren or our neighbours, is not a thing to be chosen or desired, or practised for itself, or its own sake; it looks too much like humour and fancy, or pride and conceit, unless there is something wherein we can exceed them in the things of duty and virtue, in matters of religion and godliness by this singularity: The dissenting interest is neither worthy nor fit to be maintained merely for the sake of dissenting, or for the keeping up of a separate party in the nation: but since we believe and are persuaded that God and our consciences call us to singularity and separation from human appointments in divine worship, let us remember that morality sometimes as well as devotion requires its votaries also, to practise singularity and courage: we must sometimes stand up alone for virtue in a vicious age, and maintain sobriety, temperance, truth and justice, in opposition to a multitude of evil doers. Let us appear to be all of a piece, and since we are not ashamed to be separatists in the cause of religion, let us never be ashamed of it in the cause of virtue.

You profess to rank yourselves among a people with whom a public and sincere regard to God and his word, even in the common affairs of life, is not yet an unfashionable thing, and God grant that it may never be put out of fashion among us, as it has long been among the bulk of this nation! See to it then that religion influences your whole form, and manner, and fashion of life, that you dare not live as *without God in the world,* without conversing with him by daily prayer and praise: See that you dare not plunge yourselves into the world, and the daily business of your calling, so as to bury and forget religion all the day long, and leave no time for some secret addresses to the throne of grace. If there be any person that practises the rules of temperance and sobriety with greater strictness and prudence than his neighbours; if there be any one that appears more remarkably just and true, and faithful in his dealings amongst men, or kind, charitable and benevolent to his fellow-creatures, and particularly eminent in the

practice of meekness, patience and forgiveness to them that have injured him, let a protestant dissenter be the man that dares be thus singular. Phil. iv. 8. *Whatsoever things are eminently pure and lovely, and of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,* if there be any thing of the practice of truth or goodness that is peculiarly honourable in the sight of men, let a nonconformist have the honour of this peculiarity. He that is singular in the church, let him bravely dare to be so in the world.

O let it never be said by those who differ from us, and especially by those who hate us, "These are the persons who profess purity in worship, but see how vicious they live! They are as much given to luxury in diet, to extravagance and vanity in dress, to every thing that is sensual and voluptuous, or gay and vain, as any of us who do not make such pretences to religion: They give their lips as wild and wanton a licence as any amongst us; they are as loose, as frothy, as unsavoury in their discourse as any of their neighbours; they have no more inclination, or at least no more courage, to speak one word for God and religion than we have, they are as ready to over-reach those who deal with them, and to cheat and defraud in matters of trade as any amongst us; they are as often found tardy in the performance of their promises, and in fulfilling their appointed payments; their consciences will stretch as largely as any of ours to indulge a pleasing iniquity, and they are as poor and wretched performers of any of the relative duties of the social life;" Oh! let it never be said concerning any of you, that you are as severe and unreasonable masters, as idle and unfaithful servants; that you are as unkind and careless, as faithless and as insolent husbands; as vain and unthrifty, as peevish and as noisy wives; as cruel parents, and as undutiful children; as ungenerous dealers, and as deceitful buyers and sellers, as any of the rest of your neighbours: Let it never be said of you, that you are catched as often in a lie, that you are as proud and haughty, as angry and passionate, as griping, as covetous and hard-hearted to the poor as any of the rest of mankind. What a shameful thing would it be if you should give occasion to the world to say, "that notwithstanding all your pretences to purity in religion, and your separation from us in our ways of worship, as though they were not pure enough for you, yet you make no more conscience of sin or duty, with regard to God or man, in the course of your lives, than any of us from whom you separate." What a cutting thought will this be to our consciences in a serious hour, or on a dying bed? What inward reproaches, what agonies will it raise in our own souls, wheresoever we have given just occasion for such a censure of our character, and such scandals to be cast upon our profession?

III. You profess to maintain and vindicate christian liberty by your dissent from the established church; you profess to bear up and support the freedom of conscience in opposition to all the inventions and impositions of men: This is certainly one ground of your separation, nor can I say it is an unjust or an unreasonable one; for when the blessed God has freed mankind from the burden of ceremonies which himself had invented and prescribed to all the world before the coming of Christ, when he has delivered all the nations from the bloody rites of sacrifice which he appointed to Noah and all his sons; when he had released the Jews from their variety of bondage, their yokes of servitude, their *weak and beggarly elements and carnal ordinances, which neither they nor their fathers could bear,* certainly he requires all the world, in the language of the apostle; Gal. v. 1, *to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free,*

and not be again entangled with the yokes of bondage: And if they must not dare to return to the various forms and rites of the worship which God himself had once prescribed, and has now abolished, surely we cannot think it lawful for us to subject ourselves to the rites which men invent, and to take up new forms and ceremonies which are not pretended to be of divine institution, but to be mere appointments of men. But it is not my work here nor my design to enter into the controversy any further than just to remember what our profession is. We declare for liberty in the things of God, and that no man has authority to bind us to such ceremonies as God has not appointed. This, my friends, is your profession, to assert your own freedom, and to vindicate the liberty of mankind and of the gospel of Christ. And now my question addresses you in the words of my text, *What do you more than others,* who give themselves up as subjects to the authority of men in matters of conscience? Since you stand up for liberty, ask yourselves the two important questions:

I. How do you manage the liberty which you vindicate? Do you turn your freedom from the imposed rules of men into a release of your conscience and practice from any of the laws of God? Do you make your discharge from human ceremonies an occasion to tempt you to discharge yourselves from any of the divine commands? Do you take the liberty of not practising different modes of worship which God and your rulers have given you, and under that pretence indulge a neglect of public worship, or a course of laziness and sloth in matters of religion? Because you do not think yourselves bound to fasting on Ash-wednesday or Good-fridays, do you give a loose to sinful appetites? While you pretend to free yourselves from religious bonds of confinement, do you suffer yourselves to be made slaves to sin, and to be *carried away captive by the devil at his will;* 2 Tim. ii. 26. Wretched and hypocritical pretence to liberty indeed, if it be stretched to this vile extent! The asserting your liberty from all human impositions in worship will go but a very little way toward your acceptance with God, unless you are free from the *bondage of corruption,* and in this respect *translated out of the dominion of Satan, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God* and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Be solicitous therefore above all things about a release from the power and tyranny of sin, that you may serve the law of God with a ready mind; and since you are called into the christian liberty, take heed that you *use it not for an occasion to the flesh.* This blessed advice does St. Paul give to his Galatian converts: *Gal.* v. 13. And the apostle Peter is jealous of the same danger among the christians to whom he writes and therefore while they are sensible of their freedom, he warns them that they should not use this liberty as a cloak for iniquity; 1 *Pet.* ii. 16. Nor let that vile character ever be charged upon you which the same apostle charges on some licentious sinners who professed christianity in his day; 2 Pet. ii. 19. *that while they promise liberty to themselves and others, they are the servants of corruption, and allure others into wantonness;* of such he pronounces *their latter end to be worse than their beginning,* and declares that *the mist* or cloud of *darkness is reserved for ever for them;* verse 17, 18, 19.

II. While you assert your own freedom from the impositions of men in point of worship, are you as careful in that you do not impose your own private opinions, nor your own particular and unscriptural practices on your neighbours, in any religious affair whatsoever? Do you never set up your peculiar invented phrases, your own forms of speech, and the particular and darling notions of your sect and party, as a test of

the piety or orthodoxy of any of your brethren, where the scripture does not go before you in plain and evident language? How reasonable and necessary is it, that you should always give your brethren of the church of England their liberty in full measure to judge for themselves in matters of doctrine, discipline, worship and practice, while in full measure you assume this yourselves? And take heed that you judge not the states and persons and hearts of others, in their several different practices and sentiments, while you so constantly and justly exclaim against their authority to judge or to censure you, or to impose any thing on your consciences. St. Paul, in his xiv. chapter to the Romans, gives happy directions to peace and love amongst all fellow-christians that hold the few necessary articles of faith and practice, though they may differ widely in their opinions about other things.

While you release yourselves from the pretended authority of a national church, because Christ in the New Testament has not established any such church on earth, see that you do not dare pretend to authority yourselves nor presume to impose any thing in doctrine, duty or worship on the minds or consciences of your brethren amongst the dissenters, which Christ has not imposed, for I am sure he has given you no such power; God alone is the Lord of conscience, and he has appointed his Son Jesus to be King and Ruler of his church. The power of imposing truth or duty on our belief and practice is vested only in him. The authority which is given to the rulers of the church, it but to declare what Christ has required or imposed. *Go*, says he to the apostles themselves, *and teach all nations to observe what I have commanded you;* Matt. xxviii. 20. All other circumstances of human actions in religious worship, which are necessary to be determined at all, are to be settled in congregations by a friendly agreement among themselves, without any pretence to superior authority and impositions. Dr. Calamy has set this matter in a very good light, in his introduction to his second volume of Moderate Non-comformity. Words of command and authority in matters of God and conscience come out of the mouths of any set of men with a very ill grace, while they remember that they are all fellow-servants to one Lord, even the great and blessed God, and to Jesus his Son, who is appointed Lord of all; but there is nothing more absurd and inconsistent than the pretence of protestant dissenters to command and impose matters of faith, worship and practice beyond the plain rules of scripture. For a protestant who owns the Bible to be a perfect and sufficient rule both for himself and his neighbour, and a dissenter who disclaims the authority of a whole national church in matters of religion and the things of salvation, I say for men of this character to assume an imposing power, this would be with a witness *to build again the things which you have destroyed*, as the apostle speaks, *Gal.* ii. 18. and to make yourselves transgressors with evidence and shame. A protestant dissenter who persecutes his brother with bitter reproaches and condemnation, because he differs from him in some of the lesser points of religion, and excludes him as unworthy of his communion for the sake of *mint, anise and cummin*, or by the test of some unrighteous *shibboleth*, some forms of orthodoxy or discipline of mere human invention, I know not a name proper for such a criminal; for while he pretends to maintain his own liberty, he makes his brother his slave: Let us watch, my brethren, against any such impositions creeping in among us, and whensoever we find any such iniquities, let us purify ourselves and cast them out.

If there be any persons in the nation who are called to greater degrees of love and forbearance than others, and who should stand further off from imposing on the con-

science of their neighbour and from judging their brother, we are the persons; we whom the laws of God and the laws of this land have permitted to judge for ourselves, and that even in opposition to the rules and constitutions of a national church. If there be any ministers or people in the whole kingdom who should shine in charity to men, in love and condescension to their brethren, and in *receiving those whom Christ has received* without laying bars of doubtful disputation upon them; we should be those ministers and those people, we who pretend to stand up to vindicate our freedom from every yoke of bondage, and to support the liberty of men and christians.

IV. Another obligation which lies upon you to do more than others is this; you and your fathers have professed to observe a greater strictness in some necessary practices of religion and virtue, than the common multitude of those who call themselves the national church; I say, the common multitude: I desire you to remember the caution which I gave in the beginning of these discourses that I had no design to compare the most strictly pious and religious persons of the church of England with those of the protestant dissenters: I am well assured there are many on both sides who make a most serious profession of piety, and who practise strict godliness; nor would they dare to offend the great God in any point, through their great tenderness of conscience; but the persons whom I compare in these discourses are the bulk or multitude of the one side and the other. I will not maintain, and indeed I cannot believe, that our fathers heretofore have been in the right in every punctilio of their severeties and restraints, which they have laid upon themselves and those of their own household. Some of them did not so well understand that great article of christian liberty, by which they professed to walk; some of them, in order to obey that advice of the apostle, that they should *abstain from all appearance of evil*, wer sometimes inclined to restrain themselves and their families from those things, which had no reasonable appearance of evil or blame in them. But I dare and I will pronounce, that in some instances of their strictness, they had the word of God and the reason of things on their side. The late Bishop Burnet, in his excellent discourse on the pastoral care, does not scruple to acknowledge that our fathers *had a good character for strictness in religion, which gained them their credit, though he suspects we in this age have in a great measure lost it;* chap. viii. p. 204. Now shall we by our sinful neglect support and confirm this suspicion? Wherein soever our fathers have been in the right in this strict profession and practice, we doubtless are more abundantly obliged to awaken ourselves to a pious imitation of them, and to do more than others in our day, as they did in theirs. Give me leave here to mention a few particulars in which our fathers eminently distinguished themselves from the bulk of their neighbours, and this shall be the subject of the following section.

SECTION V.

PECULIAR PRACTICES OF VIRTUE AND PIETY AMONG THE ANCIENT NONCONFORMISTS.

I. Our ancestors the puritans and nonconformists distinguished themselves by their great reverence of *the name of God*, and keeping a constant jealousy and watchfulness over their words, *lest they took that holy name in vain.* This has been your character in days past, in the age of your predecessors, and I hope this honour remains still amongst you. When persons, even such as appear sober and virtuous, have made free with the

sacred names of God and Christ on trivial occasions, when upon some strange story related in company, or some new occurrence in life, they cry out, *O Lord, good God, God bless me,* without any appearances of solemnity or a serious air; when in their daily language and discourse, they can hardly ask each other a common question, or request a common kindness, but they enforce their request or enquiry with some divine name, *for God's sake tell me, for Christ's sake do this for me:* I say, when we hear such speeches, we have been wont to take it for granted that these persons are not dissenters, for we were never suffered in the days of our younger education to take those holy names into our lips in so thoughtless or irreligious a manner.

Or in the usual language of life, persons have been wont to confirm the truth of what they speak by these sort of oaths, *by my faith, or upon my salvation, or as I live, or as I hope to be saved, or as sure as God is in heaven,* we could readily pronounce that whatever religion they were of, and whatsoever sect they pretended to, they could not be protestant dissenters; for we were never indulged to use such asseverations, nor to make such trifling mention of things that relate to our infinite and everlasting interest; we were never suffered, while we were under the government and education of our parents, thus to break the command of Christ, who forbids us in our common discourse to practise swearing, but requires that our communication be maintained with plain *yes or no;* for whatsoever forms or words of asseveration we use that border upon swearing by God or creatures, whether at full length or in abridgment, carry some danger of guilt in them, *and come from the evil one;* Matt. v. 37. Now I think it would very ill become us to depart from these instructions and examples of our parents, to abate our respect for things that are holy, to cast away, our reverence for an oath and the awful names of God and his Son, and to indulge ourselves in this dangerous and criminal language, which is too much in use with the common multitude. I could wish indeed from my soul, that there might be no distinction ever left amongst us, to know a dissenter or a churchman by such forms of speech, or by an abstinence from them: I wish all our brethren of the established church would be as cautious and watchful against such unwarranted freedoms as some of them are, and would forbear to break the third command, which forbids *us to take the name of the Lord our God in vain,* or to trifle with things sacred; but if any of them will continue to practise it, let us not be ashamed to distinguish ourselves as the offspring of the puritants, and as protestant dissenters, who have learned of our fathers to pay a religious reverence to all that is holy.

II. You and your predecessors have been very much distinguished from the bulk of the nation, by observing *the Lord's-day* with greater strictness, in employing the several parts of it in religious worship, private or public, so far as the strength and health of your bodies would permit, and so far as is consistent with the common necessities and occasions of life. This has been a distinction of considerable standing, and that not in a town or two, but generally throughout the nation.

If persons heretofore neglected to worship God publicly above once a day, unless they were confined for want of health, or by the necessary duties of life; if they counted it of no importance how they spent their time when public worship was ended; if they indulged themselves in little recreations abroad or at home, or in unnecessary businesses or amusements; if they wasted the afternoon in prolonging their dinners, and filled up those hours with the pipe or the glass, or with impertinent conversation, which the more serious employed in public assemblies of worship; if they made the Lord's-day evening

a season of familiar visits, wherein they wore away another hour or two in discourse of secular affairs, in trifling subjects, as now-a-days over a tea-table, or in the more gustful and modish language of scandal and defamation; if they made no account of any other part of the day besides that which was actually spent in public devotion, but turned it into hours of diversion and entertainment, we have been wont generally to conclude, and with good reason too, surely these persons can never be nonconformists, for their education never would have permitted them to pay so slight a regard to the Lord's-day.

Well, my friends, how stands the case now amongst you? *What do you more than others?* Does the same distinction still remain between you and your neighbours? Or is it lost and vanished away? I am well assured there are some members of the national church, that pay a most religious regard to the day of Christ and his resurrection; but there are multitudes that make but little account of it, especially when divine service is ended. Are you careful, my friends, to distinguish yourselves from these your looser neighbours in this matter? Or do you give yourselves up to vain amusements and impertinences on *the Lord's-day*, or to trifling and formal visits; and thus deprive two families at once of the serious improvement of what you and they have heard in public worship? Are you careful to spend as much time as you can in the worship of God through Jesus Christ, and in the concerns of your eternal welfare, either in the closet and retirement, or with some pious companions? Or do you lavish away the evening in familiar forms of complaisance and ceremony, entertainment and diversion, without a word of God and religion, or recollecting the sermons of the day for your mutual increase of knowledge and grace?

I shall not detain you here to enter into a debate about the morality of the sabbath, or the abolition of it among other jewish ceremonies, or the changes of it from the seventh to the first day of the week: I shall not stay to enquire what degree of holiness belongs to each part of that day, or to the seventh part of time; but these three things, I think, I may lay down for certain truths:

1. If there had not been sufficient commission given by the authority of Christ for appointing *the first day of the week*, which was the day of his resurrection, to be the constant season of solemn assemblies for christian worship, I am persuaded the apostles would not so frequently have chosen out and fixed that day for the public ordinances of *preaching*, and *praying*, and *breaking of bread?* Now it is evident from the New Testament they practised this, and appointed it in the churches which were converted to the christian faith: I add further, nor would it have been so universal and distinguishing a mark of a christian in those primitive times to be an observer of *the Lord's-day;* nor would it have been so early and so universally practised by all the christian world after the example of the apostles, which is sufficiently manifest in the ancient histories of the church: It is certain therefore that this was the day appointed to the primitive church for their religious assemblies by apostolic practice and direction, and it is most reasonably inferred they had the authority of Christ for it.

2. If there had not been such a season as one day in seven maintained and continued for a day of public devotion through the christian nations, considering the opposition of rulers, the vicious course of the world, and the negligence of christians, it is pretty certain that the cares and labours or pleasures of life, that secular businesses or idle amusements would have long ago thrust christianity almost out of the world, and have

gone near to banish true religion and godliness from the face of the earth: and where *the Lord's-day* is most neglected, serious religion is almost lost and gone.

3. If after we have heard sermons on *the Lord's-day*, and waited on God in public prayers and praises, we should make a custom of devoting all the rest of the day to our own purposes in the labours or diversions of life, it would be a most effectual way to lose and abolish all the pious thoughts and the devout affections which might be raised in the heart by any part of the public worship in which we have been engaged: Thus the very design of the seasons of worship would be lost, and all the pious sentiments and dispositions drowned and buried in business or pleasure. It is the reviewing of the truths and duties which we have heard in the ministry of the gospel, it is the meditation of them in our retirements, the conference upon them in our families or in friendly discourse, the turning them into matter of secret or family prayer, in confession, petition or praise, and converse about them between God and our own souls, and the carrying on of the same spiritual designs by reading books of piety and holy conversation, that is the only sure way to render public worship effectual to fit us for heaven, and to answer the religious purposes of *the Lord's-day*. If therefore any persons in this nation resolve to give themselves a loose in this point, and take no care to improve the hours of this day to the grand designs of religion and salvation; if they will waste them away in trifles, in useless visits or amusements, let it never be said that a protestant dissenter is amongst them, or gives any encouragement or countenance to such a practise.

III. I am naturally led, in the next place, to mention religious discourse and conference upon themes of virtue and practical godliness, as another thing whereby dissenters heretofore where used to distinguish themselves: *They exhorted and comforted one another* under their sorrows by holy conversation. If a person with never so much prudence and seriousness should introduce a discourse of holy things into a friendly or familiar visit, and especially if he should give a rebuke to any profane speeches, some of the company would have been ready to say, *surely this man was some dissenter, some precise puritian:* and this honour was done us by those who designed contempt and reproach.

Well, how stands the case now? Are not the dissenters as backward as others to begin religious discourse, to put in a word for God or virtue, or to introduce any thing of heaven into their conversation? Are we not as shy, and as much ashamed as our neighbours of bearing the face of religion in the world? Do we keep upon our tongues the language of piety, and attribute the prosperous or afflicting changes of life to God and providence, or only to good luck and misfortune? Is our communication such as may *administer grace to the hearers*, and maintain a savour of godliness upon all proper occasions? Do we banish entirely from our visits all loose and profane discourse, and the more notorious crime of scandal, and introduce in the room of it the language of the children of God? *They that feared the Lord*, in the days of Malachi the prophet, *spake often one to another*, for their mutual support and assistance in the things of religion; *and they shall be mine saith the Lord, when I make up my jewels.* The apostle Paul bids the Thessalonians converse freely with each other upon the future happiness of saints, the appearance of Christ in his glory, his descending to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to carry up his friends to everlasting joy; 1 *Thess.* iv. 18. and v. 11. This practice would the apostle fain introduce as a custom or fashion among his converts to christianity, who should distinguish themselves from the world. Let us enquire what is our custom

in this case, and what do we more than others? Or have we duly maintained the pious custom, the practice and honour of our ancestors?

IV. Another thing wherein our ancestors distinguished themselves, from many of their neighbours in the towns and villages where they lived, was in keeping more regular hours for the various duties to God and man, in abstaining from vain company and much wine, in preserving better order in families, and in a more religious concern in governing their households, in maintaining the daily worship of God there, by reading the word and prayer with an uninterrupted constancy, and in training up their children and their servants to the knowledge and fear of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ, with utmost solicitude and holy watchfulness. It is true these pious practices were more common in the whole nation three or fourscore years ago than they are now: But if there be any degeneracy in that respect among our neighbours, is there not as great or greater degeneracy in proportion reigning and visible amongst us?

Shall I address myself with freedom to the parents and governors of families? Are you as solicitous to keep up the seasons of worship in your households as your fathers were? Do you not suffer every little pretence now-a-days to break in upon the appointed times of family religion, and oftentimes to prevent it entirely? Nay, are there not too many among you who scarce ever call upon God in their families at all, unless it be perhaps on a Lord's-day evening? Are you so careful to keep regular hours for the various parts of the business of the day, or have you learned to change the course of nature, to turn night into day, and day into night, and to confound the order of things? Can the seasons of family worship be well maintained, or can the master perform it with a clear head and a pious heart in the evening, if he indulges his amusements in public drinking houses till near eleven o'clock at night, or till the hour of midnight approaches? Is not evening worship very often utterly neglected by this means? Is there any such thing as devotion paid to God in the morning, even in those families whose affairs and circumstances would admit of it, if there were a sincere desire in the masters to maintain it?

I grant there are some employments, conditions, and cases of life, where it is hardly possible for the household to meet together in the morning; but I am well assured, there are many families wherein this piece of religion is neglected, who can make no sufficient apology or just excuse for it. It is with pleasure that I remember that elegant reproof given to a degenerate age, in a sermon preached, but I think never published, by the late Bishop Burnet. *In the days of our fathers*, said he, *when a person came early to the door of his neighbour, and desired to speak with the master of the house, it was as common a thing for the servant to tell him with freedom, my master is at prayers, as to answer now, that he is not stirring.* This eminently refers to the days of the puritans, or the time before the restoration. In which words there was a short, a gentle, and a comprehensive rebuke given to three or four vices at once, *viz.* to the waste of daylight in sleep, to disorderly hours, to the neglect of family devotion, and to the being ashamed even of the domestic forms of religion and godliness; all which now prevail so much amongst us. But if this neglect has so much overspread the families of the established church, have not the dissenters lost their religion also in a sad proportion?

Will you complain that our fathers did not always maintain the decency in their expressions in family worship, which becomes persons addressing the great God, and that you are not capable of expressing yourselves with a due degree of propriety and

decency in addressing God while others are present, and therefore you entirely omit the duty: But give me leave to ask, Is it not better to honour God in your household, by daily acknowledgment of his mercies, and committing yourselves daily to his care and blessing, though you cannot do it with such accuracy as you desire, than to forget God entirely, and never acknowledge him at all? Besides, as you have often heard from me, and I repeat it again, the worship of God in various forms of prayer, precomposed and fitted to the common circumstances of morning and evening, is infinitely preferable to the neglect of family religion, and the taking no notice of God in your house. Now there are many such books for daily devotion written by some of the divines of the established church, where the sense and expressions are proper and pious: I wish some of our brethren among the dissenters would not only encourage, but assist their flocks to offer up such morning and evening sacrifices in those families where now there is no prayer. Those who find not in themselves sufficient courage or ability to pray without these helps, may obtain excellent assistance by the prudent use of them. Where any peculiar circumstances occur in families, which may occasion the omission or change of a few words or sentences, or the inserting some new petitions, it will be found no difficult matter to those to practise this with decency and honour, who set about the work in good earnest, and seek for the assistance of the Spirit of God, who is called *a Spirit of Supplication.*

I might enquire further under this head, Are you so diligent and solicitous that your children and servants should know and love God, as your ancestors have been? Does it appear in their improvement in the knowledge and practice of christianity above their neighbours, that they belong to the family of a protestant dissenter, whose character in a former age was famous for education in all the strictest courses of piety and virtue? Or are your households as ill-instructed and as ignorant as any of your neighbours round about you? What have you done in this matter more than others?

But masters of families are not the only persons that fall under this head of admonition: I fear there are others in our age who continue from their early education to worship in general amongst protestant dissenters, and yet neglect the good customs of their ancestors: Who spend too many hours of life in public houses, who sometimes raising their spirits a degree above cheerfulness, protract their mirth beyond the midnight hour, and pacify their consciences with this pretence, that they have no family which wants or requires their presence at home? But do not their closets miss them? Do not their Bibles want their perusal? Doth not Solomon wait for them with a word of reproof to *those who tarry long at the wine?* Prov. xxii. 29, 30. Do not the families where they dwell feel the inconveniences of such late watches? Will not their own health of soul and body find the mischievous effects of it? Will not their character suffer as the offspring of protestant dissenters, and the profession which they still make of nonconformity? Will they continue nonconformists to the church, and be so very *conformable to the sinful world?* Is this *to abstain from all appearance of evil?* You will find many more pertinent enquiries on this subject in a "Serious Address to those who unnecessarily frequent the Tavern," printed lately in New England.

In the fifth place, may I mention frugality in expences and industry in their particular callings, as a remarkable pair of virtues among our predecessors, the puritans and the protestant dissenters, our fathers? I mean particularly in this respect, that the want of those virtues scarce ever appeared in the ruin of families, and a bankrupt was almost an unknown name amongst them: Such a man would have borne a long and heavy load of

infamy, and have been excommunicated at once, and cast out of the church with abhorrence, in our fathers days, unless he could with the greatest evidence have made it appear, that some sudden overwhelming distress, some ruinous providence, or some surprising loss, had been the occasion of it.

But how stands the case now? Is not bankruptcy reckoned too small a crime amongst the dissenters, as well as amongst their neighbours? And that where there can be found no other reason for it but that they have lived too fast, they have affected the luxuries of life in their dress and furniture, food, equipage and attendance, and would vie with their neighbours in splendour, grandeur, and expence, where the circumstances of their estate or trade have not been able to afford it? Or perhaps they have frequented taverns early and late, they have habituated themselves to a morning whet, to prepare for some luxurious dish at noon; they have indulged their pleasures, and neglected their shop; they have trifled away their time in idle company, and left the business of the proper hour undone; or it may be they have sought to grow rich at once by plunging themselves into trade and debt beyond all proportion of their own estate, or possibility of payment, if they should meet with any disappointing accident; and they have too often assumed the character of *the wicked, who borrows when he knows not how to pay again*, and run on borrowing without end and without measure, so long as they could find any artifice to support credit; they have supplied their shops with goods, their table with costly provisions, their houses with rich furniture, and their family with shining apparel, out of the purse of their credulous neighbour, and perhaps made him pay their heavy scores in the tavern also. A man who should have been found in the practice of half these vices, would never have been called a dissenter in the days of our fathers; and it is a heavy shame, and an insupportable disgrace, that there should be any such characters in our day that should wear the name of a nonconformist: But it is well there is purity of discipline enough in our churches to refuse them at the table of the Lord.

I proceed now to the sixth and last thing wherein the protestant dissenters were wont eminently to distinguish themselves, and that is in their abstaining from those gayer vanities and dangerous diversions of their age, which border so near upon vice and irreligion, that sometimes it is pretty hard to separate them; such are many of our *midnight assemblies, midnight balls, lewd and profane comedies, masquerades, public gaming tables, and deep play*, and such like places and methods of modern diversion, where temptations abound and surprise the unwary, where virtue and religion are in extremest hazard, and sometimes receive a sore and lasting wound. In this respect shall I put the question, *what do you more than others?* It is granted, there are some persons of the established church that have avoided these things as well as our fathers, the puritans, and in some few families, even of figure and condition, these perilous amusements may be disallowed, or seldom frequented: But it was a constant and known mark of a protestant dissenter in former days, to refuse attendance upon any of these kind of diversions, and boldly to deny his company when he was never so much importuned. I hope we have not utterly lost those pieces of puritanism amongst us.

I grant that our present age having run so much greater lengths in liberty than the age of our ancestors, there may be some degrees of allowance, or at least some excuses drawn from the too general custom of others in those things which cannot be certainly proved to be sinful, though they may possibly have a dangerous appearance and ten-

dency: When a whole age takes large liberties, even persons of sobriety and virtue are under great temptations to extend the limits of their rules of practice? It was a known saying of one of the ancients, that *those things might be done by men of virtue among the rabble of Romulus, which ought never to have been done in the republic of Plato.* It is granted further, that it is hard to prove every one of these diversions I have mentioned to be absolutely and universally unlawful: And it is possible that persons of piety and seriousness may give themselves leave, upon just reasons, to attend once or twice in the course of life upon such diversions; perhaps it may be done in order to know what they are, that they may not utterly condemn things which they know nothing of, and that they may pass a just judgment concerning them; or upon some other very uncommon occasion and occurrence, where the real service or advantage does plainly overbalance the danger of hurting our own spirits, or of giving a bad example to others.

But upon the whole, it must be confessed, that to make these sort of entertainments a frequent practice, tends greatly to corrupt the savour of piety, and flatten our relish for divine things; it is ready to thrust out the religion of the closet and the family, to weaken the springs of virtue, to take off the guard of the conscience, to sensualize the mind, and fill it with vain images, which too often pollute the imagination, and oppress the young seeds of virtue and godliness that were beginning to spring in the heart. And I am bold to say, that if our fathers were in any degree too rigid and austere in pronouncing these things absolutely criminal and sinful, and in their utter prohibition of themselves and their household from ever once attending upon them; it is certain that we their children are much more criminal in giving too great a loose to many of these diversions. Can you not name the dissenters who waste that time at a playhouse, or a vain assembly of merriment, at a public gaming table, or a dancing room, that time, I say, which belongs to God or their families? Who spend those seasons in late visits and private balls, or at cards, whereby evening devotion is excluded utterly? Who can wear out whole hours in these foolish and perilous recreations, and complain they have no time for prayer? Can you point to no persons who are members of dissenting churches who entice their acquaintance to these vanities? Do you know no mothers who lead their little daughters thither, nor fathers who permit their sons to go without controul? And do they know, or will they not believe, that the road to lewdness and impiety, to ruin and beggary, lies through these scenes of dangerous diversion? The loss of religion, the loss of time, the loss of virtue, the loss of reputation, the loss of estate in many families of the nation, bear a loud and lasting testimony to the dismal influences of these practices, and methinks a protestant dissenter, who professes to maintain greater degrees of purity in public worship, should also be solicitous to keep himself pure from these appearances of evil in public life, and to abstain from those stages of vanity wherein there is so much danger of defilement and mischief.

To sum up all in general, your fathers had an honourable character, and a very great reputation, even among the looser parts of the nation, for strict virtue, for exemplary and sincere godliness beyond the common bulk and multitude of those who called themselves the established church; for if any person appeared to be strictly religious, and fearful of indulging any sin or compliance with evil company, if he were scrupulous of any doubtful practice, or attempted to give an admonition to the sons of vice, he was presently called *a puritan*, or *a fanatic*, or *presbyterian*, by way of reproach. This honour was a frequent tribute paid by the ungodly world to the superior virtue and merit of your ancestors,

and their profession of nonconformity. What is become of this your reputation, this honourable character? Have you lost your good name? Have you sold your glory for the indulgence of the follies and vanities of life? Have you fallen into such a neglect of strict religion as leaves no other distinction between you and your neighbours, besides your worship once a week in a different place and manner? It is time, my friends, when religion is sunk into such a universal decay in the nation, it is time to enquire whether we have not suffered it to decay amongst us also, whether we are not sharers in the common degeneracy. It is high time to awaken our souls, and enquire, *what do we more than others?* If the bulk of the nation be gone far in the neglect of virtue and godliness, let us not dare to *follow the multitude*, and make our profession of separation an empty name, and our pretence to purer worship a mere badge of hypocrisy. Let us remember, if God should take up his rod into his hand, to punish a sinful nation with an *overflowing scourge*, we who follow any of the vicious customs of the age, who conform to the iniquity of the times, and never separate ourselves from the growing ungodliness of the land, shall be mingled with our neighbours in the common calamity and desolation; our profession of a separate and purer communion will but aggravate our guilt. If we do no more than others in the practice of sincere piety, why should we expect to be distinguished from others by any peculiar instances of sparing mercy?

SECTION VI.

OF THE SPECIAL ADVANTAGES FOR PIETY WHICH SOME PERSONS OF ALL PARTIES ENJOY ABOVE OTHERS.

HAVING ended my survey of the special advantages for improvement in piety which are found in the separate assemblies of protestant dissenters, above those who generally attend on the worship of the established church, and the special obligations that we lie under to do more than others, I proceed one step further, which shall be the last; and that is, to survey any other peculiar advantages or peculiar obligations which belong to some persons of all parties among us above their fellows, and to enquire into their behaviour and improvement in practical godliness, whether it has been answerable to the special circumstances of obligation and advantage with which the providence of God has favoured them. And here let it be observed, that though these two general heads of obligation and advantage are often found together, and belong to the same persons; for every advantage lays a special obligation on him that enjoys it; yet for method's sake it may be more proper to treat of them distinctly.

First, What are the advantages which some of every party enjoy above others?

I. I will address myself then to you who have been blest with a more strictly religious parentage and pious education among any party of christians whatsoever; and borrowing the words from the lips of our Saviour, I would enquire, *what do you more than others?* You who have been trained up in *the forms of godliness* from your youngest years, and the nursery has been made as it were a Bethel, or a house of God; you have been early taught to read the holy scriptures, in which Timothy was instructed from his youth, to the great honour of his mother and grandmother, whose names have an everlasting memorial in the book of God; 2 *Tim.* i. 5. and iii. 15. You have been nursed up in the constant attendance on the worship of God in the family, and in the public assembly; you have been

taught from your infancy to pay honour and respect to every thing that relates to God and religion; how stands the case with you now? Do you pay more honour to God in the world than is practised by your neighbours? Do you maintain a greater reverence to things sacred, and do you walk more closely with God? The examples as well as the advices of your parents have been continually set before you; you have been instructed in all the rules of honesty and virtue, of sobriety and kindness, one would expect that you should have been a considerable blessing to the world, and honourable instances of all that is pious towards men under such happy advantages; enquire, therefore, what is the frame of your heart, and what has been the conduct of your life? Have you forgot the labours and cares of your parents, and the religious practices which they introduced into your youngest years of life? Are you grown weary of them already? Do you despise all these serious things in the wanton gaiety of your youth, as the follies of childhood, and the errors of the nursery, and the weaknesses of your infant state? This is the reproach, this the scandal which some wild young rebels have insolently cast on all the pious cares of their parents, and the forms of a religious education: *But we hope better things of you*, and that you have grown up from the lower class of instruction to some of the more manly and advanced lessons of godliness and virtue? Surely you can shew a fair and honourable superstructure, since you had so happy a foundation: Are you not arrived at higher degrees of religion and goodness than your neighbours, since your early blessings did so far exceed theirs? This ought to have been your character, and we hope this has been indeed your practice.

Methinks some of you should say thus to yourselves: "Am I not a branch of an ancient pious family? Am I not a young descendant of the people of God through many generations? What care ought I to take to support the honour of my ancestors and the dignity of my family in the sight of God and man? It is not enough for me to compare myself with others, and content myself to be as pious and as sober as they are who never enjoyed such early blessings; but I am bound to maintain a visible superiority in the several instances of piety and virtue, if possible, above my neighbours, that the ancient reputation and credit of my name and family among the churches of Christ may not sink into disgrace, or lie buried in forgetfulness, lest the world and the church should join in the deserved reproach and infamy of so *degenerate a plant* as I am."

Can you not remember the wise counsels and compassionate advices which came daily dropping from a father's lips, and from the fondness of his pious heart? Can you not remember the tender admonitions that a mother has given you rising and going to rest, while she softened every word with a tear of love? Have you not known their painful solicitude of soul for your happiness and your eternal interests? What have you done with all these lessons of piety, these assistances to virtue and goodness? Have you *cast them all behind your back*, and are you grown as negligent of God and Christ, and religion and sacred things, as those who have been brought up as the savages of the wilderness, and have been suffered to run at large in a wicked world, thoughtless of God and of all that is holy? Have you taken no more care to practise the rules of sobriety and temperance than those who have been nursed up in a wild and licentious indulgence of appetite and passion? Have you no more strictness in your morals than those who were born in families which made no pretences to virtue, and took no care to instil the principles of religion and goodness into the souls of their offspring? It is time, my friends, it is high time to bethink yourselves, and put such enquiries as these to

your own consciences; these early blessings will become a terrible aggravation of your guilt in the great day of account, if the Judge shall then find that you have abused and lost them.

II. You who have sat under a serious, a fervent, and evangelical ministry, who have heard betimes of the evil of sin, who have been taught the danger of your state by nature, that you are *afar off from God* and heaven, you who have been instructed early in the gospel of Christ, and the methods of his salvation, by the preaching of the word, *what have you done more than others?* You have known Jesus betimes, and learned his offices as a *Mediator* to bring sinners near to God; as a *Prophet* to reveal the mind and will of God to you; as a *High-priest* to make atonement for sin on earth, and to intercede for you in the court of heaven; as a king to give you laws, and to govern you; as a heavenly example of all that is pious toward God, and beneficent toward man: Have you ever endeavoured to impress on your own hearts a deep and humbling sense of your sinful and dangerous state, without renewing grace, and an interest in the Mediator's love? Have you ever *yielded yourselves up* to this blessed Mediator, and received his salvation? Have you prayed earnestly for the divine influences of the Holy Spirit, which you have been often told are promised in the gospel, to make you new creatures, and assist you in every duty? Have you had a constant awful sense of death and judgment, of heaven and hell, which have been so frequently set before you in the ministry of the word, and impressed upon your ears and your consciences with life and fervency? Have your fruits of holiness been answerable to this favourable cultivation which heaven has bestowed upon you? Do you remember that awful representation of your case by the apostle in Heb. vi. 7. *The earth which drinketh in the rain that comes oft upon it, and still bears nothing but briars and thorns, is rejected of God, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned?* And can your own reason or your conscience afford you one word of apology or defence against this righteous curse and this burning sentence?

Let us think with ourselves, what multitudes there are who have not been trained up in the ways of public worship, who through the wickedness of their parents, or through their great distance from the places of any religious assemblies, have been very much unacquainted with any of the blessings of a gospel ministry: Think what numbers of families, especially in the country, are brought up to the labours and drudgeries of life at the distance of some miles from a church of any kind, and are not able to attend on any ministrations of the gospel without great fatigue and inconveniences: How transcendent have our advantages been above others? Have we made a right use of these blessings? We who dwell as it were in the house of God, who live near the gates of Zion, who have the ordinances of Christ brought almost to our doors, have we delighted ourselves in the worship of the sanctuary, and in the assemblies of the people of God? Or have we cried out *what a weariness is it?* And have we neglected the methods of grace which the providence of God has brought so near us? Have our lips, and our lives, and whole behaviour manifested that we have been often with God, and that we have been nourished up in holiness with the provisions of the house of God? Do we think these heavenly provisions will never be accounted for? Or that the great God will never ask what use we have made of them all?

III. You who have been favoured with religious friends, companions, and acquaintance in the course of life, such as you may converse with freely about the things of God and your own soul, and who will be ready to help you onward to the way to heaven,

what have you done more than others? How desirable a thing is it for young christians to have such a friend as David; Psalm lxvi. 16. *Come unto me, and I will tell you what God has done for my soul?* How happy is it to be placed amongst such acquaintance who will walk with you in the road to salvation, and with whom you may *go to the house of God in company?* When young persons first begin to be awakened to a sense of sin, to enquire *what they must do to be saved,* and to *set their faces toward heaven,* how sweet and unspeakable a blessing is it to have a religious friend near them, to whom they can unbosom themselves, who can assist them with their advice, encourage them with their company, support them by their own experience, and keep religion warm in their hearts by holy conference? Who can give them a gentle admonition of their danger, who can stir them up to duty whensoever they grow negligent, and recal them when they wander from the paths of piety and peace? What advances in holiness are justly expected from persons who have enjoyed such an advantage as this?

How afflictive and melancholy is the case of many persons in their younger years, whose lot is cast in families where there is not so much as the profession or form of godliness? Who have had not one religious acquaintance, not one friend to speak a serious word to them for months or years together? Who are under the perpetual impression of *evil communications,* and the mischievous influence of wicked companions? Who are drawn away by times into snares and defilements ere they are aware of their danger? How unhappy are they who, instead of hearing pious discourse, live daily in the midst of profaneness? Who are surrounded with the language of hell, and where oaths, and curses, and blasphemies of the name of God are made constant and familiar? And if at any time a holy thought, or an awful sense of sin be awakened within them, the divine spark is quenched on a sudden, and never suffered to kindle into a flame; and every hopeful appearance of religion or virtue is blasted and destroyed in the very bud? How much more blessed are your circumstances who have been freed from the temptations of evil company in the dangerous years of youth? It is expected that you should preserve yourselves more unspotted and pure from all the vices of the age, that your lips and your lives should be untainted with the licentious impiety or lewdness of the times, that your behaviour should be more agreeable to the rules of strict godliness, and your virtues in the world should shine with a more illustrious light, and your souls be animated with the pure flames of devotion, since you have had nothing to damp or discourage them. But, on the other hand, if ye have run into the paths of folly and madness, without the allurements of an evil companion, without the influence of a wicked example, without those temptations to which others are exposed, how aggravated is your guilt in the sight of God, and how deep and sensible ought your repentance to be?

IV. You who have had books of piety and religion put into your hand from your youngest years, and have been taught to read the great things of God and of your salvation, what have you learnt, what have you done more than others? You who have been excited and encouraged to acquaint yourselves with the necessary and important things of religion by reading; who have had the rules and advice, the precepts, the promises, and threatenings of the word of God, drawn up into a narrow compass in religious treatises, and set before you in a most powerful and persuasive manner; you who have enjoyed the labours of your fathers, and are addressed by the dead and the living, in their practical and pathetic writings, with the kindest exhortations to virtue and piety, and the most awful warnings against every sin; you who have been allured by all the

most engaging methods your parents or your friends could think of to acquaint yourselves with the histories of scripture, the doctrines of religion, the examples of godliness, and the important affairs of your immortal souls: It is expected that you should exceed others in practical godliness, since you have enjoyed all these assistances. Let us be persuaded to consider with ourselves, how many there are of our age that never had one pious book put into their hands, and it may be they have never been taught to read; or if they have learned the art of reading, it has been employed from their childhood in wanton songs, in lewd novels, or trifling romances; and thus their fancies and their thinking powers have been unhappily tinctured with iniquity, and vitiated even from their youngest years; What degrees of holiness have we attained higher than they; What improvement have we made of our privileges to acquire more eminent advances in piety, and get further onward in our way to salvation:

V. You who have had closets or secret chambers at your command, and proper places of retirement provided for you, wherein to retreat from the world, and converse with God and your own hearts, what have you done in religion more than others? This is a most considerable advantage for improvement in godliness. Matt. vi. 6. our Saviour bids us *enter into our closets, and pray to our heavenly Father, who seeth in secret*, and he promises in his Father's name *that he will reward us openly*. What multitudes are there in the world whose parents have been so negligent of serious religion both in themselves and their offspring, as never to contrive or provide for their children either any opportunities or any conveniences for secret worship; nor have the young creatures ever been taught to retire from the world, and call upon God in secret? And what numbers also have always lain under such strait circumstances, even from their childhood, that they are seldom able to find a retiring place, the whole family being confined to a single room or two? And if at any time the word of God has reached their consciences, and awakened them to a painful sense of their sin and danger, if they have been earnestly enquiring after relief, and pardon, and salvation, when their souls have been full, and ready to overflow under a deep impression of divine things, they have neither had a friend into whose ears they could vent their inward sorrows, nor a secret corner to retire where they might *pour out their souls before God?* This has been a most afflictive and painful hinderance to young and early religion: But as for you who have enjoyed blessed advantages for retirement, what have you profited by them? O say thus to your own souls, *Have I made more constant visits to heaven than others? Have I conversed more frequently with God than they? Have I arrived at a more humble and intimate acquaintance with God through Jesus Christ the Mediator? Have I attained greater freedom at the throne of grace, and treasured up richer experiences about the duty and the grace of prayer, the pleasure and the success of it? Have I learned more of the temper of my own heart when I have had such conveniences for retirement and for self-examination, such opportunities to converse with God and my own soul, and to transact the important affairs of eternity?* Which of us in this assembly who have enjoyed this advantage have not reason to *smite upon our breast*, to acknowledge our guilt, and to mourn before the Lord?

VI. You who are not so overburdened with the businesses and cares of life but you can find frequent seasons of leisure, which may be employed in the concerns of your eternal interests, what do you more than others! Methinks when I observe some persons, and even whole families, under such degrees of poverty, that they are forced as it were to

plough and thresh for their bread from morning to night through the whole week, who are as it were chained to the labouring oar, and must sweat and toil early and late, and break in upon the hours of natural sleep and repose in order to support this mortal life, and to furnish themselves or their household with food and raiment; when I observe how very little time or leisure they can employ to the purposes of religion for their own profit, or for the spiritual benefit of their offspring, I cannot but pity them at my heart: And if at any time they have had any breathings of soul after God or godliness, the perpetual cries of nature in their poor starving families have almost drowned the voice of awakened conscience, and made them neglect *the one thing needful:* They have been so constantly engaged in labouring *for the meat that perishes,* that they have little time to seek *that which endures to eternal life.* Surely upon a review some of us should be awakened to reflect upon many wasted hours of leisure that we have spent in vanity, and whole days that have been squandered away in foolish, trifling, or vain amusement. Oh how much better might many of these happy seasons have been improved in closets and retiring rooms, in reading or prayer, to carry on the designs of religion and our everlasting happiness!

How valuable a thing is time, though it flies away in silence, and so much unnoticed and unregarded! Time for rebels to seek their peace with God! Time for guilty creatures to implore a pardon! Time for those whose hearts are by nature corrupt and sinful to labour with their hard and sinful hearts, by applying the promises, the precepts, and the threatenings of the word, in order to soften, to purify, and refine them! Time to wrestle with God in prayer for the assistances of his Spirit! Time for miserable creatures to pursue happiness! Time for mortal creatures to prepare for death, and for their immortal spirits to get ready for eternity! How richly might time here on earth be improved to lay up treasures in heaven, to gain high degrees of religion and every grace, and to make swift and glorious advances towards the state of the blessed! How much more than others should we practise religion and godliness, who are blessed with this treasure of time? What further advances should we have made in the road to heaven who have any considerable share of time and leisure at our own disposal? And how many wasted hours and moments have the best of us to account for, which might have been employed to sublimer purposes, and have raised our souls nearer to God?

VII. You whom the God of nature has distinguished by any natural talents or qualifications above others, what have you done in the service of God more than others? You who are blessed with sprightly parts, with a sagacity of mind, with a solid reason and judgment, with active and vigorous powers of nature, have you learned more of God than those who are of slow understanding, and whose minds are less receptive of knowledge? Have you gained a deeper insight into the grounds and foundations of the religion which you profess? Are you better acquainted with the great and important articles of the christian faith and practice than others? Can *you render a* better *reason of the hope that is in you,* according to the advice of the apostle Peter; 1 *Peter* iii. 15? Can you say more for the defence and vindication of the gospel against the bold attacks of the atheist and the infidel? Have you set your ingenuity at work in any happy contrivances for the honour of God, or for the welfare of men? When the great Judge shall make an enquiry, *how have you employed your brighter talents of wit and reason?* it will be no sufficient answer to tell him how busy you have been in trade, and how ingenious to enlarge your estates, to build fine dwellings, and to *add field to field,* and grow richer than all your

neighbours, while you used neither reason nor thought in the service of religion. But it will have a much worse appearance still, if it were found that you have turned the edge of your wit against religion, and made yourselves and your companions merry at the expence of the honour of Christ and his gospel; that you have been sharp and ingenious for the contrivance of new vices, and the practice of folly and madness; that you have been swift to improve in every thing besides religion and virtue, and that *you have been wise to do evil, but to do good have had neither knowledge* nor inclination; *Jer.* iv. 22. Such bright and ingenious sinners will expose themselves to the fiercer flames of the indignation of God, and those who have thus abused the sharpness of their wit shall feel the keener pain in their consciences.

You who have been endowed with strong and capacious memories to treasure up much knowledge, to retain long what you have learned, and to recollect it with ease, with what sort of treasure have you furnished this noble repository of the soul? Have you laid up nothing there but trifles and fooleries, nothing but stories and jests, but vanity and impertinence, or lewdness and scandal? And have you neglected the solid riches of divine knowledge, and the important matters of religion and eternal life? Or have you taken care to *hide* a larger portion of *the word of God in your hearts* than others, *that you might not sin against him?* Have you treasured up more of the truths, the precepts, and the promises of the gospel? Does *the word of Christ dwell richly in you*, according to the advice of the apostle; *Col.* iii. 16. Are you ready on every proper occasion to entertain yourselves and your friends with holy communications, *with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, which have been laid up in your hearts? Or have vain rhymes and wanton sonnets filled up and defiled that cabinet of the soul?

You who are adorned with a good natural temper, who are ever ready to oblige and please, who have not so many of the seeds of malice and envy in your constitution as many of your neighbours have, and in this respect may be said to have more of natural virtue than they; O what a blessed foundation is this upon which to raise an honourable superstructure of piety and moral goodness? You have not so many vicious qualities to subdue as others, and yet have you suffered vice and unruly passions to prevail as much in your hearts? Have you been solicitous to adorn religion with this amiable character which God and nature has given you? Have you brought his offering to the service of the gospel? Have you maintained your candour and benevolence, you charity and goodness towards mankind who converse with you? And have you made the profession of christianity appear illustrious in your behaviour? Have you employed these good dispositions of nature to shine in the kingdom of grace, like diamonds polished and set in a ring of gold? There is abundant reason to expect you should do more honour to religion than others, who are blessed with a temper that so happily imitates virtue and holy love. But have you devoted this blessing merely to earthly friendships, and shewn your compassion and kindness to the rest of the world, with a neglect and disdain of the friends and servants of God? Reflect a little, my friends, for what end did the God of nature confer all these blessings upon you! Did he mould you of such a happy constitution in vain? Do you serve sin and sense, the flesh and the devil, and the common offices of this perishing life with these natural talents and advantages, and never think how much you might advance your eternal interests by them? Do you never consider that you are obliged to serve Jesus your Lord with them, and to do more in the world for

God than others? For God, who is the spring and fountain of all these blessings, and has entrusted you with them for the honour of his own name?

VIII. You who have been favoured with inward workings of heart toward God in your early years, you whose tender consciences have been awakened betimes to a sense of sin, and have been convinced of your guilt and danger by the blessed Spirit of God, you who have enjoyed many a holy motion of this blessed Spirit upon your souls, who have been brought often upon your knees to the throne of grace to seek pardon of sin, peace with God, and eternal life in your days of childhood, what eminent advances in religion should you have made before this time? What have you done more than others? You who have been trained up almost from the beginning of life under the instructions of God as well as the instructions of men, what progress have you made answerable to these double and divine advantages? You who *have tasted* betimes *that the Lord is gracious*, have you learned to live upon his grace? Or have you lost this savour of religion, and are grown careless of securing the love of God to your souls? Shall I address you in the language of the apostle; Gal. iii. 3. *Having begun in the spirit will ye end at last in the flesh?*

You who have learned the first lessons of christianity long ago, and begun to practise them under the early influence of inward awakenings, what high degrees have you acquired in the school of Christ above others? Have you learned to obey the Spirit of God in all his motions better than others! Are your corruptions more entirely under restraint? Are your native sins more effectually subdued? Are your youthful passions and appetites better governed? Is your delight in the things of religion risen higher than theirs? Is your patience under sufferings from the hand of God more stedfast and exemplary, and your meekness under provocation from men more conspicuous? Have you learned more of the practice of compassion, love, and tenderness to your fellow-creatures, and especially to those who love God? What can you say concerning your improvement in these instances? Where are all the hopeful appearances of virtue and godliness which rejoiced the hearts of your pious and tender parents, and gave pleasure to all your religious acquaintance? *Is your goodness like that of Ephraim, like the early dew, and a morning cloud that vanishes away?* Hosea vi. 4. Is there no reason for God to upbraid you as he did his people Israel of old; Jer. ii. 1. *I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou followedst me in the wilderness?* May not Christ send his apostle to reprove you, O backsliders, in the language of St. Paul to the Galatians, v. 7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?* What if God should pronounce concerning you that he would send his Spirit to strive with you no longer, and abandon you to the madness and folly of your own hearts, and give you up to everlasting wanderings?

IX. You who have been trained up as the children of God under the divine discipline of long or sharp afflictions, what have you done more for God than others, or what have you learned more of inward piety. The apostle, in the twelfth chapter to the Hebrews, makes it appear that these fatherly chastisements of God are of great advantage to the growth of virtue, and considerably assist our improvement in godliness. It is a message of religious profit, though it be a painful one: *As many as I love*, saith our Saviour, *I rebuke and chasten;* Rev. iii. 19. The design of God in these afflictive providences is to make us *partakers of his holiness.* Enquire then into your own hearts, you who have had *the voice of the rod* joined together with the voice of the word, have you attended duly

to the divine warning, and obeyed *him that speaks from heaven?* And have you found your hearts weaned from those vices which your heavenly Father designed to chasten and subdue?

You that have been long confined to chambers of sickness, that *have been chastened upon your beds with strong pains*, and have felt the tabernacle often tottering and ready to fall into the dust, have you yet learned silence and submission to the hand of God? Have you *learned obedience by the things which you have suffered*, in conformity to Jesus the Son of God? Are you more weaned from this world and the love of life, who have been so often upon the borders of the grave? Are you more prepared for death than those who never came within the views of it? Has every severe shock of nature made you examine the truth and evidence of your grace, so that you have acquired a more solid and well-grounded hope? Are you more thankful than others for some little measures of health which you enjoy, and more solicitous to improve every inch of time and every hour of ease to some valuable purposes?

Have not some of us frequently seen death entering into our own dwellings, or into the house of our friends? Have we yet learned to die? And are we prepared to meet that last enemy better than those who never have been so near him? Have we learned to part with our friends without so much discomposure as others manifest, since we have had frequent occasion to make use of the consolations of the gospel on this account? Do we live more upon God, an ever-living and almighty friend? Has the cutting off the streams of blessings amongst the creatures made us dwell more at the fountain, and abide nearer to God? Perhaps some of you may have been smitten in your estate, and have lost a considerable part of your substance in the world; you have been reduced, it may be, from plentiful circumstances to a more scanty diet, to coarser clothing, and a meaner appearance, and are deprived of some of the conveniences of life; have you learned to live without them with an easy and peaceful heart? Is your spirit weaned from those grandeurs or shewish appearances of life which are by no means necessary to true happiness? Are you able to say with St. Paul; Philip. iv. 11, 12. *I know both how to be abased and how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry;—for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Or perhaps you have been trained up all your days in strait circumstances, you have laboured hard to support nature, and you have been freed from the temptations that attend riches and grandeur, have you learned to live without envy against the rich and the great; *envy, the natural vice of mortals in mean circumstances?* Have you depended on the providence of God for your daily bread on earth, and learned this holy lesson of faith? Have you taken so much the more care to secure to yourselves *treasures in heaven that never fade, and the bread that nourishes to eternal life?* Are you among the number of those who are humble and lowly as your circumstances require? Have you been taught to be *poor in spirit?* You have had but few temptations to pride, have you therefore more effectually subdued this common iniquity of nature? Ye have tasted few of the charms of this world, and have had no strong allurements to earth, is your heart therefore more loose from earthly things? Is your substance *laid up in heaven*, and are your *affections set on things that are on high?* Have you any solid evidences that your name is written among the number of those who are *poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?*

Are there any of the sorrows or difficulties that any of us have passed through in this

world, that have made us eminently fit for a better? Have any of the afflicting strokes of the hand of God made a sensible separation between us and our idols? Or are we found in that rank of men of whom the prophet speaks in the name of God, Jer. ii. 30. *In vain have I smitten your children, they have received no correction;* and whom the prophet complains of to God himself, Jer. vi. 3. *O Lord, thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive instruction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return?* What if the blessed God should cast us out of his fatherly care, and say in the words in which he taught the prophet Isaiah to address the Jews, *Why should you be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more;* Isaiah i. 5. How dreadful would the case be, if God should *give us up to our own hearts' lusts,* without any further instance of paternal discipline and love? What if he should pronounce in his wrath as he did against a degenerate people by the prophet Hosea, chapter iv. 17. *Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone?* let him run on in the course of his iniquity till he has made himself ripe for utter destruction. There is no painful stroke of Providence but carries with it an awakening voice; and if we have been often smitten with the rod, we have received so many fresh warnings from heaven; what are become of all these warnings? Are they lost, forgotten, and cast behind our back? *Have we endured so many things in vain, if it be indeed in vain?* Gal. iii. 4.

SECTION VII.

OF THE SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS TO PIETY WHICH LIE UPON SOME PERSONS OF ALL PARTIES ABOVE OTHERS.

Having finished the general head of advantages which some christians of all parties enjoy above others, I proceed in the next place to consider what special obligations lie on some christians beyond others to practise religion toward God, and goodness toward men, and to enquire whether such persons as lie under these obligations have made answerable improvements:

I. You who enjoy easy and comfortable circumstances in the world, who are blest with riches, or have at least a very happy sufficiency to answer all the cravings of nature without the everlasting and anxious cares of *what shall I eat, or what shall I drink, and wherewith shall I be clothed?* What have you done for God more than others? I will not, I dare not say, that the great things of this world are a certain advantage to piety, for *riches are sometimes kept for the owners to their hurt;* they frequently become temptations to pride and vanity of mind, to the mirthful extravagances and follies of life, and lead away the soul too often to forget God; yet this I may venture to say, that the comfortable circumstances of this life are not in their own nature snares to the soul, but they are always an obligation which God lays upon his creatures to raise a revenue of glory for him, and in a way of gratitude to do more for his name in the world than others. *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase;* Prov. iii. 9. Though riches may become a snare if they are unblest, yet they also may be improved to blessed purposes in religion, and enable us to do much for God. Are you among the number of those who are *rich in this world,* and are you also *rich in good works,* which is the charge of St. Paul to the christians of his day who enjoyed a larger share of the blessings of this life? 1 *Tim.* vi. 17, 18. Do the lips, and the hearts, and

the bowels of the poor bless your name, and give thanks to God on your behalf? Do the churches of Christ acknowledge your bounty for the support of the common interest of Christ and his gospel? Does your liberality and benevolence in all proper instances of piety and charity bear a proportion to the treasures with which God has entrusted you? What have you done more than others, whom the great God hath made stewards of a larger heap of his earthly blessings?

II. You who have received great and remarkable deliverances from death or misery, or mischief of any kind, by the favourable providence of God, you that have escaped imminent dangers by fire, by water, in travelling by land or sea, have you offered all due acknowledgments to the kind and almighty Guardian of your life and peace? Do you remember how frequently David devotes himself to God after every fresh deliverance, how he engages himself in love, and blesses the name of the Lord for ever, and what a multitude of psalms he has written with this very design? And can your consciences declare what are the thankful returns, that you have made to the God of your lives and your mercies? What have you done beyond others who have never tasted the pleasure of such salvations? What sacred and lasting influence have any of these providences left upon your hearts?

You who have been on the very borders of the grave, and ready to enter into the invisible world, under the terrors of a guilty conscience, and utterly unprepared to die, and yet God has commanded the grave to shut its mouth again, and respited your life *from going down to the pit* for a longer season, have you taken any new care to prepare for death, that when the next sickness comes you may not be surrounded with the same horrors? Or are you as careless of your eternal interests, as thoughtless of God, and religion, and the concerns of your soul as you were before, or as others are who never enjoyed such a warning? What is become of all those keen terrors that seized you on the brink of the grave? What is become of your tears and mournings, your vows and resolutions, and your holy promises, if God would spare you but a few years longer? What, are they all vanished together with your sickness? Was the wound of your heart healed so slightly as to leave no remembrance upon your thoughts, and no happy effects in your life? Are you no better than your former evil companions? no better than you yourselves were before this affliction and deliverance? Are you returned again to your old iniquities, to your neglect of duties, and your forgetfulness of God? Surely the next message you may expect from heaven is the sudden stroke of death, without any opportunity for prayer or season for repentance.

III. You who are fixed in any special station of superior influence upon others, as parents, as governors of families, as ministers, as instructors of youth, as men of honour and reputation, of rank and character among your neighbours, it is expected that you should do more than others.

Are you a parent, and have you brought children into the world tainted with the common corruption of human nature, have you derived to them vicious inclinations from Adam, the first transgressor, and are you not under the strongest obligations to seek the renewal of their nature by divine grace? Are they come into this world by your means, under the unhappy circumstances of mankind, as criminals and *strangers to God*, and do you not feel yourselves under powerful engagements to bring them acquainted with the God that made them, and lead them into the methods of his love? Do you think yourselves bound to provide food and raiment for them, because you are the instruments of

bringing them into this mortal state, and under these necessities of nature; and are you not as much obliged to take care of their immortal interests, since you are also the occasion of bringing their souls into being? For when a son of Adam is born according to the common law of nature, there is an immortal creature brought into existence, and a life of eternal duration is begun. You who have taken some care daily that your children should be early acquainted with the common affairs of this perishing life, but have you been as deeply solicitous to acquaint them with the concerns of their immorality? Have you sought out any tender moments of address to impress their consciences with an awful sense of God and religion, to let them know their sin and danger in a state of nature, and to lead them to Jesus, the only Saviour of souls? Have you watched the moments when they have begun to manifest the first young efforts of reason, and have you then endeavoured to make them sensible of the important things of religion, and proceeded by degrees, as their age would bear, to lead them into a larger knowledge of truth and duty? Have you taken notice of those seasons when their consciences have been first uneasy under a sense of sin, and endeavoured to improve that conviction, and to carry on the work of God? You have taught them, and they have learned to know, their own natural wants of food and raiment, and relief under pain, and to address their parents on earth for supplies; and have you never let them know what their spiritual wants are, nor instructed them in plain and easy language to ask a supply of their Father who is in heaven?

You have greater advantages for this purpose than ministers or teachers of any kind: The fondness of a mother's love, and the authority of a father's voice, mixed with becoming tenderness, are suited to make deep and lasting impressions upon their offspring in early years: Have your parental love and authority been duly employed to this divine purpose? Have you endeavoured to diffuse the knowledge of God among your younger household, and have you made perpetual and fervent addresses to the God of all grace upon their account? Have your secret chambers been witnesses of your wrestlings with God in prayer for their salvation? And besides all this, have you set before them a bright example of piety and virtue in your own behaviour? Have the lessons which you have taught them by your own practice happily concurred with the instructions of your lips to train them up for God and heaven? What can you say, my friends, to such enquiries as these? Have you been faithful to this trust, and have you done any thing answerable to these high engagements? Or have you only brought these infants into a world of sin and sorrow, and taken no thought nor pains to make them holy and happy? Have you introduced them into a state of immortal existence, and yet employed no care nor labour to render that existence happy, and to bring them up for the blessedness of heaven? Is not this what you owe to your young offspring, and to your own character as parents?

I should here address all governors of families, as well as parents, and those whose business it is to teach and instruct children, or who take servants into their house. You provide the conveniences of this life for servants, and ought you not to have some care of their souls as well as of your own. It is the honourable character that God himself gave Abraham; Gen. xviii. 19. *I know him*, i. e. *Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord;* and his *servants* as well as his sons were circumcised, and entered into the bond of the covenant. Where servants are instructed and admonished by their superiors with that just tender-

ness and respect as creatures made of the same flesh and blood, there may be much done to win them to Christ; and where there appears a hearty solicitude for the welfare of their souls and their highest interest, they are not always such untractable creatures as to refuse the assistance that a master or mistress might give them in the way to heaven; and remember this assistance comes with a double influence upon the hearts and consciences of those that are under your government, when the mingled principles of authority and love join in religious advice.

Here I might address magistrates with a warm enquiry, what do you more than others? But we have few of that character who attend our separate assemblies. I might address ministers in the same language, who are eminently entrusted with the care of souls; but while each of us are engaged in fulfilling our own proper posts of service, we have but very little opportunity of giving or receiving such mutual advices in our public ministry. Yet would I not suffer this moment to pass away without renewing the enquiry upon my own conscience, *What do I more than others?* And in pressing the solemn charge upon my own heart of behaving in all my ministrations, and all my studies, as becomes one that is interested in the care of immortal souls.

IV. You who have given yourselves up to Christ by a solemn and public profession of his name, and have joined yourselves to the Lord in his visible church, to partake of the special ordinances of the gospel, *What do ye more than others?* You have declared to the world in a solemn manner, that you have listed yourselves under the banner of Christ, that you have taken up arms against sin and every enemy of your salvation, and that you are become the disciples of the meek and holy Jesus, what have you done answerable to these solemn engagements, beyond those who have lived more at large, who have walked at a loose from all such sacred bonds? *The vows of God are upon you,* and you have recognized your obligations to be the Lord's: Have you had *your conversation in the world* like the covenanted servants of Christ? Have you kept yourselves at a distance from the defilements of the world, as a people purchased by the blood of the Son of God, and devoted to his faith and love? Have you learned to be meek and holy, and harmless, and full of compassion to men, and zealous for the honour of God, as Jesus your Master was? *Why do ye call him Lord and Master, if you practise not the rules of his advice, nor imitate his divine pattern?* You who have often joined in the public worship of God as your God through Christ Jesus your great Mediator, and what have you gained by all these seasons of devotion? Are you brought nearer to God than others? Are you made fitter after every such sacred season to join the worshipping assembly in heaven?

You who have often been partakers of the blessed institution of *the Lord's-supper,* and by this means lie under powerful obligations, and enjoy special advantages for holiness, what do you more than others? His holy supper is provided for the exercise and establishment of your faith on a crucified Christ: It is appointed for raising and inflaming your love to God the Father, in sending his Son to die for you, and to Jesus the Son, in submitting to death for your sakes: It is designed to encourage and advance your everlasting hope, and your holy joy in the Lord; and it is given you also to represent and to promote your union and love to all fellow-christians, and to lay you under the strongest and most solemn engagements to fulfil all the duties of christianity. Shall I entreat you to enquire into the frame of your hearts, and to look back on your behaviour in life? Are these holy and happy ends of so sacred an ordinance in any measure obtained by you in

a higher degree than those who have no opportunity to enjoy it, or no inclination to attend it? Is your faith in a dying Saviour established so, that you can say, you will venture to live and die *by the faith of the Son of God?* Is your love kindled into a higher flame to him *who died for you?* Is your hope more confirmed? Is your view of heavenly things, *where Jesus is at the Father's right hand,* more constantly maintained? And do ye walk in *the joy of the Lord?* Do ye feel the powerful influence of these holy solemnities engaging you to a more undaunted profession of the name of Christ, and the practice of every duty toward God and man? Do you find your hearts more united to your fellow-christians in love, by communicating with them in the same bread, and drinking of the same cup, and by this emblem of your visible union to one head, even Christ Jesus? Are you animated to fulfil difficult services by these heavenly refreshments? Do you find your souls nourished by this bread of life? Are you strengthened to bear the fatigues of the christian soldier, and supported by these holy cordials under the daily trials and troubles of mortality? You ought to think with yourselves, *To what purpose have I eat and drank so often at the table of the Lord, if my religion be still in a starving way? How little influence have all these sacred vows and engagements had upon me, if I suffer myself to neglect duty, or be defiled with sin as often as those who never partake of this entertainment?* And think also what a shameful discouragement you give to those who begin to set their faces toward Zion, if an inhabitant of Zion, a member of a christian church, has not something more heavenly about him than those who have not yet separated themselves from this world.

V. You who have had long and large experience of the goodness and grace of God through the whole course of life, and are now arrived at *a good old age,* and drawing near to death and eternity, *what do ye more than others?* Do not the invisible things of a future state appear to you in a fairer and stronger light when you are brought so near them? And have they not more constant influence upon your heart and life? You who have so often *tasted that the Lord is gracious,* and have seen so often the interposures of his providence to save you from threatening dangers, and the glorious accomplishments of his promises in the many occurrences of the christian life, are you better acquainted with the worth of these promises, and more ready to trust them upon every new difficulty? Have you learned to live upon a naked promise more than others, and to expect all from God when you see new distress arising, and the help of creatures failing you? Do you make it your business to encourage younger christians to walk onward in the way of faith and holiness, and that sometimes by telling them what you yourself have seen and felt of the grace of the Lord, as well as what you have read and heard of it in his gospel? Do ye invite, animate, and comfort the younger disciples in the school of Christ at proper seasons, and say, *Come all ye that fear and love the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul?* Are the many condescensions of divine mercy to you entirely forgotten? Is the remembrance of the various instances of his grace lost out of your minds? Do ye stagger at every new difficulty? Are you frighted at every fresh trial? Have ye been trained up in the school of Christ so long, and learned so many lessons of faith and godliness, and are ye still beginning again, *still learning the first principles* of duty and hope? What have ye done with all your experiences of the favours of heaven, and the rich grace of Christ?

You whose tottering tabernacles give you notice that they are ready to fall into the dust, have you attained a greater assurance of *the building of God not made with hands,*

that is reserved in heaven for you? Have you learned to say with holy triumph, *We know that if this earthly house be dissolved*, there is a nobler habitation waiting for us on high? Have you this heavenly inheritance always in view and hope, and are you ready to be dislodged from your dwelling on earth, that you may dwell with Christ in heaven? Are ye *confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*, and that upon just and solid grounds? Oh it is high time for you who are so near to eternity to get your whole souls loosened from the little affairs of this mortal state! You who make daily approaches to heaven, it is time to be weaned from every thing on earth, and be dead to all that is not divine: You should begin as it were to put on the vestments of paradise and immortality, and to diffuse a savour of the holiness and the joy of that place round about you, and let the world know that you are near to God. Or can you wear out whole days and weeks together, and never speak of Christ, of heaven, of the pleasures at the right hand of God, and the happiness to be found in his presence? And do you suffer this little remnant of life to wear out daily without some efforts for the honour of your heavenly Father and your Saviour? Can you pass your time away amongst men, and walk busily about their affairs, without any lively or joyful thoughts of the business and the blessedness of the saints on high, and *the spirits of the just made perfect?* Are you so near to the place where God and his Son Jesus dwell in their brightest glories, and say nothing of them to your friends round about you? So near the borders of the upper world, and yet cleave to the dust as others do, and discover as much attachment to earthly things as those who are in the midst of mortal amusements, and in the vigour of human life? If this be your temper still, what apology can be made for you? what pretence of an excuse? How much do you dishonour religion in old age, and disgrace the profession of fifty or threescore years?

You who have walked with God so long through this wilderness, and have been fed, and clothed, and supported all the way, who have been delivered from many enemies and many dangers, from fires and waters, and perils of every kind, who have been carried through multitudes of difficulties, and made to triumph over huge temptations, and have had rich experiences of the grace and mercy of God through all your pilgrimage, can you not rejoice in him, trust him in this last stage of life, and venture through death and the grave leaning upon his arm? Have you so often committed your souls into the hands of your blessed Redeemer while they dwell here in flesh, and can you not commit your souls with holy cheerfulness and joy into the same hands when you are departing from these regions of flesh and blood, and entering upon the paradise of God through the dark valley? Can you not say with the holy psalmist, Psalm lxxi. 20. *Thou hast done great things for me, O God, who is like unto thee? Thou hast shewed me great and sore troubles*, and given me many a salvation; *thou shalt quicken me again even from the dust of death, thou shalt bring me again from the depths of the earth; my God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.* Has he carried you through *six troubles*, and cannot you venture yourself under his conduct and care to pass through *the seventh* at the appointed hour, and to make the number of your victories and salvations complete? We hope you have taught younger christians to live and walk with God, by your exemplary behaviour and heavenly conversation, and will you not also teach them to die, by rousing your faith into an active vigour, and raising your courage high at the gates of death and the borders of glory? What will the world say, this sinful

and unbelieving world? And what will younger christians be ready to say, if they observe such as you are cast down and overwhelmed with tumultuous fears at the approaching hour of your departure, when you have all along professed to the world how divine a support your religion contains in it against all the terrors of death and the grave?

SECTION VIII.

PERSUASIVES TO SUPERIOR VIRTUE AND PIETY.

Before I entirely finish this discourse, perhaps it may not be amiss to mention a few motives or persuasive arguments to awaken and excite you to improve in religion and virtue proportionably to all your advantages and obligations. I confess, throughout the train of my discourse I have given frequent hints of this kind already, and therefore I shall mention but a few, and shall be more brief in the proposal of them.

I. If your practice of sincere godliness bear no proportion to the obligation you lie under, and to the advantages you have enjoyed, you will disappoint the just and reasonable expectations of God, angels, and men concerning you. It is true, indeed, the blessed God, who foreknows all things from the beginning, cannot be really disappointed, in a proper sense, by any occurrences among the children of men; but he is pleased often to condescend in his word to talk with us after the manner of men, in order to awaken us to diligence, to watchfulness, and to an improvement of our blessings to some answerable purposes in religion. So he argues the case concerning the unfruitful nation of Israel, whom he called and chose to be his own people; Isaiah v. 3, 4. *What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?* The ever-blessed God complains here of his people like a vine-dresser disappointed of his hopes.

Again, Angels expect it of you, for they are ministers of many a favour of God to you: They are witnesses of your privileges and your obligations; they rejoice at your conversion to God, and at your growth in holiness, and at every victory you obtain; but perhaps you give them occasion to carry many a melancholy message concerning you to their Lord in heaven; melancholy messages indeed of abused privileges and broken obligations. There are seasons *when the sons of God* who are sent through the earth *come to present themselves before the Lord*, and give an account of their commission and your conduct; *Job* i. 6. O may you furnish those heavenly ministers with constant matter of joyful tidings to the throne! And let me add further, men expect it of you, both the good and the bad: Every one that observes what advantages you enjoy for godliness, and what special obligations you lie under, expects to see some fruits of holiness answerable to your profession, and to the cultivation which heaven has bestowed upon you. Your fellow-christians would rejoice to see your religion in a flourishing state, and the ungodly world *watch for your halting*, and stand ready to cover your names with reproach if you fail in your duty. But this leads to a second motive.

II. If you neglect to improve your obligations and advantages, you will give a scandalous and mournful occasion to the wicked to speak evil of the ways of God and godliness: They will be ready to cry out, *This religion and virtue has nothing in it, for the strictest professors of it shamefully fail in their duty.* And as every party of christians suppose themselves to have some peculiar advantages, you will give occasion to every different sect and party to throw disgrace upon your particular profession, if you

pretend to more than others, and practise less. *What are these people who would have us believe that their advantages for improvement of holiness are superior to that of their neighbours? Are these the persons that possess privileges above the rest of the world, and yet make no higher advances in virtue or purity of life, and have as little of sobriety, or honesty, or of religion in them as their neighbours?*

III. Unless you improve the blessings you enjoy for the purposes of godliness, you will forget all these blessings, these peculiar advantages for religion, and provoke a righteous God to remove them. This was the case with Jerusalem, the city that was beloved and favoured of God with his own presence, above all the cities of the earth, and whither he sent his own Son from heaven with a special commission of grace and peace to the numerous inhabitants of it; but they had abused all their mercies, they had misimproved all their privileges, and forfeited all the favours of a condescending God; and therefore the Son of God himself pronounced their destruction, though at the same time he wept over the rebellious city, and shed tears of pity at the thoughts of their ruin; Matt. xxiii. 37, 38. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou* who *killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Behold your house is left unto you desolate.* Luke xix. 42. *If thou hadst known in this thy day* (i. e. in this last message which God has sent thee by me, his Son) *if thou hadst known the things that belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes, &c.* The same sort of threatening is pronounced against the chief priests and elders of the people, *Matt.* xxi. 43. The gospel of the Son of God was preached to them, and rejected by them, *Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Some of the primitive christian churches who enjoyed glorious advantages had such a sentence of forfeiture threatened and executed upon them; Rev. ii. 5. *Remember from whence thou art fallen,* O church of Ephesus, *and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place,* i. e. will dissolve thy church, and deprive thee of all holy ordinances, which was done effectually in the course of punishing providence.

And in our day, we christians in Great-Britain, by neglecting to improve our advantages, may provoke God to take away his gospel from amongst us, by permitting a spirit of apostacy and infidelity to overrun the whole nation. We protestants may endanger the loss of our reformation by such impious negligence, and expose ourselves in the providence of God to some dreadful and bloody desolation, whereby we may be given up to idolatry, superstition and tyranny. We dissenters, by the misimprovement of our present privileges and peace, may forfeit these mercies into the hands of a righteous God: And though no authority of man can justly deprive us of our liberty to worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, so long as we pay proper duties to the state, yet in the course of providence a just God may suffer some unrighteous and cruel faction to arise in the land, which may prevail to the ruin of our liberties, to the destruction of our peace, and to the shame and scandal of a protestant kingdom.

I might upon this head address myself particularly to those of every party who enjoy any special advantages above their fellows, and neglect to improve them. What if God should bereave us of the advice of religious parents, the assistance of pious friends, the affecting and happy ministry of useful preachers, the conveniences of retirement and a closet, leisure and seasons for religious worship, or any other privileges whatsoever,

whereby our souls might have made advancement in their way to heaven? What if in the course of his dispensations in the world he should bring us into circumstances of powerful temptation? What if he should cast our lot in wicked families, or take away all opportunities of public worship? What if he should confine us to beds of sickness, and visit us with a variety of distresses of every kind? Such sufferings may give us a painful remembrance and bitter resentment of our criminal abuse of former mercies.

Or what if our rebellion against the dictates of conscience, and our frequent resistance of the good motions of God's holy Spirit, should provoke him to withdraw all those kind and heavenly influences, and to give us up to the hardness of our own hearts? What if conscience should grow stupid and senseless and reprove no more? What if the word and Spirit of God should call and invite us no more! What if we should be left to our own folly and madness, abandoned to the power and tyranny of our own iniquities, and run on without restraint or remorse to the dreadful precipice of eternity, till we fall into the pit of fire and darkness whence there is no redemption?

IV. If you neglect to live answerable to the privileges which you enjoy, and the bonds which lie upon you, your guilt will be aggravated, and your final condemnation enhanced, in proportion to these neglected obligations, and to these abused advantages. Thus it was with the towns of Chorazin and Capernaum, wherein our Saviour had preached his divine doctrine, and wrought many mighty works; *Matt.* xi. 20—24. *It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon*, two heathen cities, and even *for Sodom and Gomorrah*, those places of abominable wickedness, *in the day of judgment*, than for the inhabitants of Galilee, who had abused such heavenly privileges. Think of this, O christian; there is a day coming when every advantage thou hast enjoyed shall appear to have been a talent that thou must account for; every obligation that thou liest under to virtue and godliness shall be brought into the account: And how terrible will that scene be, if all these privileges, trusts, and engagements shall appear before the eyes of God, angels and men, to have been wretchedly misimproved by thy negligence? That awful hour is hastening upon us, when *the Lord Jesus Christ in flaming fire*, and upon a throne of judgment, shall repeat the same question to us christians, to us protestants, to us inhabitants of Great-Britain, and to us professed dissenters, *What have you done more than others?* And the voice from the tribunal shall carry in it another sort of accent and majesty than that in which it was pronounced heretofore in his sermon on the mount. Let each of us think with ourselves what answer we shall be able to make to such a voice of solemn and dreadful enquiry, if we cannot now give a tolerable answer when our ministers or our own consciences put the same question to us. What tremblings will seize our souls, what horror overwhelm our guilty consciences, if all these advantages and these obligations in the fearful review shall serve only to aggravate the condemning sentence, and shall lay us under tenfold punishment from heaven? How dreadful will be the anguish of conscience in that day, when we shall find ourselves condemned without remedy!

V. The last motive I shall mention is of a more gentle and alluring kind. Talents and advantages well improved are the way to obtain still greater advantages on earth, and will increase your crown of righteousness, and your everlasting reward in heaven. Matt. xiii. 12. *Whosoever hath*, and has improved what he enjoys, *to him shall something further be given, and he shall have more abundant advantage;* and Luke xix. 16, 17, &c. *He that received ten talents*, and improved them wisely, *was made ruler over ten cities: He*

that had two talents was made governor of two, while the unprofitable servant, who bound up his talent in a napkin, and made no use of it, was dispossessed of what he enjoyed, and was driven *into everlasting darkness* and misery, *where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;* Matt. xxv. 30.

You who profess to traffic for the riches of heaven, have you no ambition in you to be possessed of some of the superior treasures, to be raised to the sublimer glories there, and shine among the brighter and larger stars? *One star will differ from another in glory;* 1 Cor. xv. 41. And they who not only arrive at heaven themselves, but lead others thither too, shall be arrayed in superior splendours; *Dan.* xii. 3. You who are racers in this holy state of christianity, have you no desire to gain some of the first and brightest prizes? There are crowns laid up for the righteous of different weight and lustre, in the hands of Jesus the final Judge, and *he will reward every one according to his work:* Those who have many talents entrusted with them here on earth, have an opportunity put into their hands of obtaining some of the nobler prizes in heaven, and of wearing some of the brighter crowns. Let each of us then say to ourselves, "Open thine eyes, O my soul, and take a just and wise survey what are thy talents, what are thy advantages; has thy improvement in divine knowledge, thy advances in grace, thy superior practices of virtue and piety, been proportionable to the blessings and privileges that God has conferred upon thee? Awake at this voice of warning! Awake, and bethink thyself, and mourn for thy former sloth, for thy shameful negligence, for thy dulness in the christian race, and all thine abuse of the favours of heaven: Awaken all thy active powers, and press forward with new zeal and activity: Strive to answer all the demands of thy high, and holy, and heavenly calling, and of the peculiar advantages which thou has enjoyed, that when Jesus thy Judge shall at last repeat this solemn question, What hast thou done more than others? thy tongue and thy conscience may give a happy account of thy past behaviour: Then shalt thou receive this blessed sentence from the lips of thy Lord, "*Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful* to the many obligations under which I laid thee, thou hast improved the numerous talents and advantages with which I entrusted thee in the days of thy flesh; here, take thou from my hands one of these fairer crowns, and ascend thou into some of the higher regions of immortality and blessedness." *Amen.*

A

GUIDE TO PRAYER;

OR, A

FREE AND RATIONAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

GIFT, GRACE, AND SPIRIT OF PRAYER;

WITH

PLAIN DIRECTIONS

HOW EVERY CHRISTIAN MAY ATTAIN THEM.

THE PREFACE.

THE duty of prayer is so great and necessary a part of religion, that every degree of assistance toward the discharge of it will be always acceptable to pious minds. The inward and spiritual performance of this worship is taught us in many excellent discourses, but a regular scheme of prayer, as a christian exercise, or a piece of holy skill, has been much neglected. The form, method, and expression, together with other attendants of it, such as voice and gesture, have been so little treated of, that few christians have any clear or distinct knowledge of them: And yet all these have too powerful an influence upon the soul in its most spiritual exercises; and they properly fall under various directions of nature and scripture. Now while institutions of logic and rhetoric abound, that teaches us to reason aright, and to speak well among men, why should the rules of speaking to God be so much untaught?

It is a glory to our profession, that there is a great number of ministers in our day and nation, who are happy in the gift of prayer, and exercise it continually in an honourable and useful manner. Yet they have been contented to direct others to this attainment merely by the influence of a good example. Thus we are taught to pray as some profess to teach French and Latin, *i. e.* only by rote. Whereas those that learn by rule, as well as by imitation, acquire a greater readiness of just and proper expression in speaking those languages upon every occasion.

I am persuaded that one reason of this neglect has been the angry zeal for parties among us, which has discouraged men of sober and moderate principles from attempting much on this subject, while the zealots have been betrayed into two extremes. Some contend earnestly for precomposed set forms of prayer, and will worship God no other way. These have little need of any other instructions but to be taught to read well, since the words, matter, and method of their prayers are already appointed. Other violent men, in extreme opposition to them, have indulged the irregular wanderings of thought and expression, lest by a confinement to rules they should seem to restrain the spirit, and return to carnal ordinances.

But if the leaders of one party had spent as much time in learning to pray, as they have done in reading liturgies, and vindicating their imposition; and if the warm writers of the other side, together with their just cautions against quenching the spirit, had more cultivated this divine skill themselves, and taught christians regularly how to pray; I believe the practice of free prayer had been more universally approved, and the fire of this controversy had never raged to the destruction of so much charity.

My design in this Treatise has been to write a prayer-book without forms. And I have sought to maintain the middle way between the distant mistakes of contending christians.

In describing the nature of the duty of prayer, though I have not enlarged much on each particular, nor multiplied subdivisions; yet I have endeavoured with the utmost care and exactness to divide the duty into all its necessary parts, that the memory of younger christians might be always furnished with some proper matter and method for their addresses to God.

The gift, grace, and spirit of prayer, have of late years been made the subject of plentiful ridicule; and while some have utterly abandoned all pretences to them, and turned the very terms to jest and reproach; it must be confessed that others have given too just occasion for such scandal, by explaining all these words in so exalted a sense, as befits nothing but divine inspiration. I have endeavoured, therefore, to reduce these terms to their more proper and rational meaning, and explain them in such a way as the wisest and best men of all persuasions, who have not been warmed with party zeal, have generally allowed. And I have had this design in my view, that plainer christians among the dissenters might understand what they themselves mean when they speak of praying by a gift, and praying by the spirit, that they might not expose themselves to the censure of talking without a meaning, nor be charged with enthusiasm by their conforming neighbours.

In discoursing of the gift or ability to pray, I have been large and particular, both in directions to attain it, and describing the mistakes and indecencies that persons may be in danger of committing in this duty; being well assured that we learn to avoid what is culpable, by a plain representation of faults and follies, much better than by a bare proposal of the best rules and directions.

But here I am pressed between a double difficulty, and already feel the pain of displeasing some of my readers. If I should describe these improprieties of speech and action in a moderate degree, scoffers would reproach a whole party of christians, and say that I had copied all from the life; while my friends would be ready to suspect that I had published some of the errors of weaker brethren. On the other hand, if I should represent these faults in their utmost degree of offensiveness, the adversary indeed could scarce have malice enough to believe any preacher in our day was guilty of them: But my friends would tell me I had played at impertinencies, by exposing such faults as nobody practises.

Now when two evils lie before me, I would choose the least. It is better to be impertinent than a publisher of folly; and therefore I have set forth those indecencies in their very worst appearance, that they might never be practised. Upon this account, I have been forced to borrow instances of improper expressions from antiquated writers; and several of the descriptions of irregular voices and gesture from some obscure persons of the last age, whose talent of assurance was almost the only qualification that made them speakers in public; and this I was constrained to do, because my observations of the prayers I have heard could never have supplied my design.

Besides, had I described some tolerable follies, perhaps weak men might have been ready to vindicate them, because they did not see deformity enough to be blamed. But now the instances I have given appear so disagreeable and ridiculous, that all men must

be convinced they ought to be avoided; and younger christians, when they learn to pray, will keep at the greatest distance from all such examples.

But it is a hard matter to attempt reformation in any kind without giving offence.—I have also added one short chapter of the grace of prayer, that the work might not appear too imperfect, though that has been abundantly and happily pursued in many treatises, and is the subject of daily sermons. In speaking of the spirit of prayer, I have tried to obviate all controversies that have arisen to trouble the church, by giving what appeared to me the most natural exposition of the chief scriptures that refer to this matter; and superadding a reasonable and intelligible account of what hand the Spirit of God may be supposed to have in assisting his people in this part of worship. At the end of these chapters I have laid down many rules borrowed from reason, observation, and holy scripture, how every christian may in some degree attain these desirable blessings; and I have concluded the whole with a hearty persuasive to covet the best gifts, and seek after the most excellent way of the performance of this duty.

Perhaps some persons may wonder, that in a treatise that professes to teach the skill of prayer, I should not once recommend the prayer that our Lord taught his disciples as a perfect pattern for all christians. But it is my opinion, that divine wisdom gave it for other purposes; and if this treatise meet with acceptance in the world, I may hereafter venture to expose my sentiments on the Lord's-prayer, if God shall ever give me health to review and finish them, with a short essay or two on the personal ministry of Christ upon earth, which are proper to be joined with them.

These institutions were at first composed for the use of a private society of younger men, who were desirous to learn to pray, and this may excuse the style and way of address in some parts of the discourse. It has lain silent by me several years, and resisted many a call to appear in public, in hopes of being more polished before its first appearance. But when I shall have health and leisure to dress all my thoughts to the best advantage, that God only knows, whose hand has long confined me. I am convinced at last, that it is better for me to do something for God, though it be attended with imperfections, than be guilty of perpetual delays, in hopes of better pleasing myself.

After all the care I have taken to avoid controversy, and express myself in such a way as might not be justly offensive to any sober christians; yet if I should prove so unhappy as to say any thing disagreeable to the sentiments of some of my younger readers, I must entreat them not to throw away the whole treatise, and deprive themselves of all the benefit they might obtain by other parts of it. Nor should they load the whole book with reproaches and censures, lest thereby they prevent others from reaping those advantages toward converse with God, which the more inoffensive pages might convey. An unwary censure, or a rash and hasty word thrown upon a discourse, or a sermon, a preacher, or a writer, hath sometimes done more disservice to religion, than could ever be recompensed by many recantations. Permit therefore the little book, that has an honest design to teach creatures to hold correspondence with their God, permit it to do all the service that it can.

Had I found any treatise that had answered my design, I had never given myself the

trouble of writing this at first, nor ventured to expose it now. There are indeed several well-composed forms of devotion in the world, written by ministers of the conformist and nonconformist persuasion; and these are of excellent use to instruct us in the matter and language of prayer, if we maintain our holy liberty, and do not tie our thoughts down to the words of men. Mr. Henry's method of prayer is a judicious collection of scriptures, proper to the several parts of that duty. Mr. Murrey has composed a volume of addresses to God, which he calls "Closet Devotions on the Principal Heads of Divinity, in the Expressions of Scripture." Both these, if rightly used, will afford happy assistance to the humble and serious worshipper. Those six sermons of prayer, published since this was written, are the useful labours of some of my valuable friends, and have many divine thoughts in them; but they take in the whole compass of this subject, in all the inward as well as outward parts of the worship; and therefore could not allow sufficient room to enlarge upon that which is my great design.

It is not necessary to inform the world, that Bishop Wilkins, in his discourse of the gift of prayer, has been my chief assistant toward the second chapter of this book; nor need I tell my reader what writings I have consulted of the learned and pious Dr. Owen, and others that have written for or against the work of the Spirit in prayer, in order to gain a clearer light, nor what hints I have borrowed from the treatise of a very judicious author, with a fanciful title imposed upon it by an unknown hand, and called the "Generation of Seekers," wherein several practical cases about the aids of the Spirit are largely and well handled; though I had the opportunity of knowing and consulting it only since this was in the press.

But if there are any advances made here beyond the labours of great men in the last age, I hope the world will excuse this attempt, and if younger christians, by perusal of these papers, shall find themselves improved in the holy skill of prayer, when they get nearest to the throne of grace, I entreat them to put in one petition for the author, who has languished under great weakness for some years past, and is cut off from all public service. If ever he be restored again, he shall rejoice in further labours for their good, he shall share in the pleasure of their improvements, and assist them in the work of praise.

A GUIDE TO PRAYER.

INTRODUCTION.

PRAYER is a word of an extensive sense in scripture, and includes not only a request or petition for mercies, but it is taken for the address of a creature on earth to God in heaven, about every thing that concerns his God, his neighbour or himself, in this world, or the world to come. It is that converse, which God hath allowed us to maintain with himself above, while we are here below. It is that language, wherein a creature holds correspondence with his Creator; and wherein the soul of a saint often gets near to God, is entertained with great delight, and, as it were, dwells with his heavenly Father for a short season before he comes to heaven. It is a glorious privilege that our Maker hath indulged to us; and a necessary part of that obedience which he hath required of us, at all times and seasons, and in every circumstance of life, according to those scriptures; 1 Thess. v. 17. *Pray without ceasing.* Phil. iv. 6. *In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.* Ephes. vi. 18. *Praying always, with all prayer and supplication.*

Prayer is a part of divine worship that is required of all men, and is to be performed either with the voice, or only in the heart, and is called vocal or mental prayer. It is commanded to single persons in their private retirements, in a more solemn and continued method or manner; and in the midst of the businesses of life, by secret and sudden liftings up of the soul to God. It belongs also to the communities of men, whether they be natural, as families; or civil, as corporations, parliaments, courts, or societies for trade and business; and to religious communities, as when persons meet together on any pious design, they should seek their God: It is required of the churches of christians in an especial manner, *for the house of God is the house of prayer.* Since therefore it is a duty of such absolute necessity for all men, and of such universal use, it is fit we should all know how to perform it aright, that it may obtain acceptance of the great God, and become a delightful and profitable exercise to our own souls, and to those that join with us.

To this end I shall deliver my thoughts on this subject in the following order:

I. I shall speak of the nature of prayer as a duty of worship.

II. As it is to be performed by the gifts or abilities God has bestowed upon us.

III. As it must be attended with the exercise of our graces.

IV. As we are assisted in it by the Spirit of God: And,

V. Conclude all with an earnest address to christians to seek after this holy skill of converse with God.

CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE OF PRAYER.

IN the discourse of prayer considered as a duty of worship required of us, that we may understand the whole nature of it better, let it be divided into its several parts; and

I think they may be all included in these following, namely, invocation, adoration, confession, petition, pleading, profession or self-dedication, thanksgiving, and blessing; of each of which I shall speak particularly.

SECTION I.

OF INVOCATION.

THE first part of prayer is invocation, or calling upon God, and it may include in it these three things:

1. A making mention of one or more of the names or titles of God; and thus we do as it were bespeak the person to whom we pray: As you have abundant instances in the prayers that are delivered down to us in holy scripture; *O Lord my God, most high and most holy God and Father. O God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims. Almighty God and everlasting King. Our Father which art in heaven. O God, that keepest covenant;* and several others.

2. A declaration of our desire and design to worship him. *Unto thee do we lift up our souls. We draw near unto thee as our God. We come into thy presence. We that are but dust and ashes, take upon us to speak to thy Majesty. We bow ourselves before thee in humble addresses,* or such like. And here it may not be amiss to mention briefly one or two general expressions of our own unworthiness.

3. A desire of his assistance and acceptance, under a sense of our own insufficiency and unworthiness, in such language as this is; *Lord, quicken us to call upon thy name. Assist us by thy Spirit in our access to thy mercy seat. Raise our hearts towards thyself. Teach us to approach thee as becomes creatures, and do thou draw near to us as a God of grace. Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for unto thee will I pray;* Psalm v. 2. in which words you have all these three parts of invocation expressed.

SECTION II.

OF ADORATION.

THE second part of prayer is adoration, or honour paid to God by the creature; and it contains these four things:

1. A mention of his nature as God, with the highest admiration and reverence: And this includes his most original properties and perfections, *viz.* his self-sufficient existence; that he is God of and from himself. His unity of essence, that there is no other God besides himself. His inconceivable subsistence in three persons, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;* which mystery of the Trinity is a most proper object of our adoration and wonder, since it so much surpasses our understanding. His incomprehensible distance from all creatures, and his infinite superiority of nature above them, seems also to claim a place here. The language of this part of prayer runs thus: "Thou art God, and there is none else; thy name alone is Jehovah the Most High. Who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord, or who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to our God? All nations before thee are as nothing, and they are counted

in thy sight less than nothing and vanity. Thou art the first and the last, the only true and living God; thy glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise."

2. The mention of his several attributes with due expressions of praise, and with the exercise of suitable grace and affection: As his power, his justice, his wisdom, his sovereignty, his holiness, his goodness and mercy. Abundance of which sort of expressions you find in scripture in those addresses that the saints have made to God in all ages. "Thou art very great, O Lord, thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Thou art the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords. All things are naked and open before thine eyes. Thou searchest the heart of man, but how unsearchable is thine understanding? and thy power is unknown. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Thy mercy endureth for ever. Thou art slow to anger, abundant in goodness, and thy truth reaches to all generations." These meditations are of great use in the beginning of our prayers, to abase us before the throne of God, to awaken our reverence, our dependence, our faith and hope, our humility and our joy.

3. The mention of his several works, of creation, of providence, and of grace, with proper praises. For as God is glorious in himself, in his nature and attributes, so by the works of his hands hath he manifested that glory to us, and it becomes us to ascribe the same glory to him, that is, to tell him humbly what a sense we have of the several perfections he hath revealed in these works of his, in such language as this; *Thou, Lord, hast made the heavens and the earth. The whole creation is the work of thine hands. Thou rulest among the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth thou doest what pleases thee. Thou hast revealed thy goodness towards mankind, and hast magnified thy mercy above all thy name. Thy works of nature and of grace are full of wonder, and sought out by all those that have pleasure in them.*

4. The mention of his relation to us as a Creator, as a Father, as a Redeemer, as a King, as an almighty Friend, and our everlasting portion. And here it will not be improper to make mention of the name of Christ, in and through whom alone we are brought nigh to God, and made his children: By whose incarnation and atonement he becomes a God and Father to sinful men, and appears their reconciled friend. And by this means we draw still nearer to God, in every part of this work of adoration. When we consider his nature, we stand afar off from him as creatures from a God; for he is infinitely superior to us: When we speak of his attributes, there seems to grow a greater acquaintance between God and us, while we tell him that we have learned something of his power, his wisdom, his justice, and his mercy. But when we proceed to make mention of the several works of his hand, wherein he hath sensibly discovered himself to our understandings, we seem yet to approach nigher to God; and when at last we can arise to call him our God, from a sense of his special relation to us in Christ, then we gain the nearest access, and are better prepared for the following parts of this worship.

SECTION III.

OF CONFESSION.

The third part of prayer consists in confession, which may also be divided into these four heads:

1. An humble confession of the meanness of our nature in its original: Our distance from God, as we are creatures: Our subjection to him, and our constant dependence on him. *Thou, O Lord, art in heaven, but we on the earth; our being is but of yesterday, and our foundation is in the dust. What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that thou shouldest visit him? Man, that is a worm, and the Son of man that is but a worm! It is in thee that we live, move, and have our being: Thou withholdest thy breath and we die.*

2. A confession of our sins, both original, which belong to our nature; and actual, that have been found in the course of our lives. We should confess our sins under the sense of the guilt of them, as well as under the deep and mournful impressions of the power of sin in our hearts. We should confess the sins that we have been guilty of in thought, as well as the iniquities of our lips and of our lives. Our sins of omission and sins of commission; the sins of our childhood and of our riper years; sins against the law of God, and sins more particularly committed against the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes it is convenient and necessary to enter into a more particular detail of our various faults and follies. We should mourn before God because of our pride and vanity of mind, the violence of our passions, our earthly-mindedness and love of this world, our sensuality and indulgence of our flesh, our carnal security and unthankfulness under plentiful mercies, and our fretfulness and impatience, or sinful dejection in a time of trouble: Our neglect of duty and want of love to God, our unbelief and hardness of heart, our slothfulness and decay in religion, the dishonours we have brought to God, and all our miscarriages towards our fellow-creatures. And these may be aggravated on purpose to humble our souls yet more before God, by a reflection on their variety and their multitude. How often they have been repeated even before and since we knew God savingly; that we have committed them against much light; and that we have sinned against much love; and that after many rebukes of the word and providence, and many consolations from the gospel and Spirit of God. You find this part of prayer very plentifully insisted and enlarged upon, among those examples that are left us in the word of God. And with these confessions we must thus bewail and take shame to ourselves. *We are ashamed, and blush to lift up our faces before thee our God, for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespasses grown up to the heavens. Behold we are vile, what shall we answer thee? We will lay our hands upon our mouth, and put our mouth in the dust if so be there may be hope.*

3. A confession of our desert of punishment, and our unworthiness of mercy, arising from the sense that we have of all our aggravated sins, in such expressions as these: "We deserve, O Lord, to be for ever cast out of thy presence, and to be eternally cut off from all hope of mercy. We deserve to fall under the curse of that law which we have broken, and to be for ever banished from the blessings of that gospel which we have so long refused. We have sinned against so much mercy, *that we are no longer worthy to be called thy children.* We are utterly unworthy of any of those favours that are promised in thy word, and which thou hast given us encouragement to hope for. *If thou contend with us for our transgressions, we are not able to answer thee, O Lord, nor to make excuse for one of a thousand; if thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, there is mercy and plenteous redemption.*"

4. A confession or humble representation of our wants and sorrows of every kind,

The particulars of which will fall under the next head; but it is necessary that they should be spread before God, and poured out as it were in his presence; for God loves to hear us tell him, what a sense our souls have of our own particular necessities and troubles. He loves to hear us complain before him, when we are under any pressures from his hand, or when we stand in need of mercies of any kind.

SECTION IV.

OF PETITION.

The fourth part of prayer consists in petition, which includes in it a desire of deliverance from evil, which is called deprecation, and a request of good things to be bestowed, which is sometimes called comprecation. And on both these accounts we must offer up our petitions to God for ourselves and our fellow-creatures.

The evils we pray to be delivered from, are of a temporal, spiritual, or eternal kind. "O Lord, take away the guilt of our sins by the atonement of thine own Son. Subdue the power of our iniquities by thy own Spirit. Deliver us from the natural darkness of our own minds, from the corruption of our hearts, and perverse tendencies of our appetites and passions. Free us from the temptations to which we are exposed, and the daily snares that attend us. We are in constant danger whilst we are in this life, let the watchful eye of our God be upon us for our defence. Deliver us from thine everlasting wrath, and from that eternal punishment that is due to our sins in hell. Save us from the power of our enemies in this world, and from all the painful evils that we have justly exposed ourselves to by sinning against thee."

The good we desire to be conferred upon us, is also of a temporal, spiritual, or eternal nature. As we pray for the pardon of all our iniquities for the sake of the great atonement, the death of our Redeemer, so we beg of God the justification of our persons through the righteousness of his own Son Jesus Christ, and our acceptance with God unto eternal life. We pray for the sanctification of our natures by his Holy Spirit, for his enlightening influences, to teach us the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, as well as to discover to us the evil of sin, and our danger by it. We pray for the consolation of the Spirit of God, and that he would not only work faith, and love, and every grace in our hearts, but give us bright and plentiful evidences of his own work, and of our own interest in the love of God. We say unto God, "O thou that hast the hearts of all men in thine hand, form our hearts according to thine own will, and according to the image of thine own Son: Be thou our light and our strength, make us run in the ways of holiness; and let all the means of grace be continued to us, and be made serviceable for the great end for which thou hast appointed them. Preserve thy gospel amongst us, and let all thy providences be sanctified. Let thy mercies draw us nearer to thyself, as with the cords of love; and let the several strokes of thine afflicting hand wean us from sin, mortify us to this world, and make us ready for a departure hence, whensoever thou pleasest to call us. *Guide us by thy counsels*, and secure us by thy grace, in all our travels through this dangerous wilderness, and at last give us a triumph over death, and a rich and *abundant entrance into the kingdom of thy Son in glory.* But since while we are here, we wear these bodies of flesh about us, and there are many

things necessary to support our lives, and to make them easy and comfortable; we entreat thou wouldst bestow these conveniences and refreshments upon us, so far as is consistent with thine own glory and the designs of thy grace. Let our health, our strength, and our peace be maintained, and let *holiness to the Lord* be inscribed upon them all, that whatsoever we receive from thine hands, may be improved to thine honour, and our own truest advantage; heal our diseases, and pardon our iniquities, that our souls may ever bless thee."

And as we are required to offer up petitions for ourselves, and *make our own requests known to God*, so we are commanded *to make supplication for all saints;* Ephes. vi. 18. *and to offer up prayers and intercessions for all men;* 1 Tim. ii. 1. And the word intercession is the common name for this part of our petitions. In general, we must pray for the church of Christ, for Zion lies near to the heart of God, and *her name is written upon the palms of the hands* of our Redeemer: And the welfare of Zion should be much upon our hearts; we ought ever to have the tenderest concern for the whole church of God in the world: His church he values above kingdoms and nations; and therefore if we distinguish degrees of fervency in prayer, we ought to plead more earnestly with God for his church, than for any nation or kingdom; that he would enlarge the borders of the dominion of Christ, that he would spread his gospel among the heathens, and make the name of Christ known and *glorious from the rising of the sun to its going down:* That he would call in the remainder of his ancient people the Jews, and that he would bring *the fulness of the gentiles* into his church: That he would pour down a more abundant measure of his own Spirit, to carry on his own work upon the earth. And we are to send up longing and earnest wishes to heaven, that the Spirit may descend and be diffused in plentiful degrees upon churches, upon ministers, upon families, and upon all the saints. We are to pray that God would deliver his church from the power of persecuting enemies; that he would restrain *the wrath of man, and suffer not the wicked to triumph over the righteous.* We are also in particular to request of God mercy for the nation to which we belong; that liberty and peace may be established and flourish in it; for governors that rule over us, in places of supreme authority or subordinate; that wisdom and faithfulness may be conferred upon them from heaven, to manage those affairs God hath intrusted them with on earth. We must pray for our friends, and those that are nearly related to us, that God would deliver them from all the evils they feel or fear, and bestow upon them all the good we wish for ourselves here or hereafter.

There is also another kind of petitions which is used frequently in the Old Testament, and that is imprecation, or a calling for vengeance and destruction upon enemies; but this is very seldom to be used under the gospel, which is a dispensation of love; and should never be employed against our personal enemies, but only against the enemies of Christ, and such as are irreconcileable to him. Christ has taught us in his life, and given us an example at his death, to forgive and pray for our personal enemies, for that is a noble singularity and glory of our religion.

Here let it be observed, that when we pray for those things which are absolutely necessary to the glory of God, or to our own salvation, we may use a more full and fervent importunity in prayer: We may say, "Lord, without the pardon of our sins we cannot rest satisfied; without the renovation of our natures by thy grace, our souls can never rest easy; without the hopes of heaven we can never be at peace, and in these respects *will never let thee go till thou bless us. For Zion's sake we will not hold our*

peace, and for the sake of thy Jerusalem, thy glory, thy church in the world, we will give thee no rest till thou hast made her the joy of the earth." But, on the other hand, when we plead with God for those mercies or comforts upon which our salvation or his own glory do not necessarily depend, we dare not use so absolute an importunity in prayer; but we must learn to limit our petitions in such language as this: "If it be consistent with thine eternal counsels, with the purposes of grace, and the great ends of thy glory, then bestow upon us such a blessing; if it may be for the true interest of our souls, and for thine honour in the world, then let this favour be granted to us; otherwise we would learn to resign ourselves to thy wiser determination, and say, *Father, not our wills, but thine be done.*"

SECTION V.

OF PLEADING.

THE fifth part of prayer may be called pleading with God; which though it be not so distinct a part by itself, but rather belongs to the work of petition and request, yet it is so very large and diffusive, that it may well be separated by itself, and treated of distinctly. Pleading with God, or arguing our case with him in a fervent, yet humble manner, is one part of that importunity in prayer, which scripture so much recommends. This is what all the saints of old have practised; what Job resolves to engage in; Job xxiii. 4. *If I could get nearer to God, I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.* This is what the prophet Jeremy practises; Jer. xii. 1. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* We are not to suppose that our arguments can have any real influence on God's own will, and persuade him contrary to what he was before inclined: But as he condescends to talk with us after the manner of men, so he admits us to talk with him in the same manner too, and encourages us to plead with him as though he were inwardly and really moved and prevailed upon by our importunities. So you find Moses is said to have prevailed upon God for the preservation of his people Israel, when he seemed resolved upon their destruction; *Exodus* xxxii. 7—14. In this work of pleading with God, arguments are almost infinite; but the chief of them may be reduced to these following heads:

1. We may plead with God from the greatness of our wants, our dangers, or our sorrows; whether they relate to the soul or the body, to this life or the life to come, to ourselves or those for whom we pray. We may draw arguments for deliverance from the particular kind of afflictions that we labour under. "My sorrows, O Lord, are such as overpress me, and endanger my dishonouring of thy name and thy gospel. My pains and my weaknesses hinder me from thy service, that I am rendered useless upon earth, and a cumberer of the ground: They have been already of so long continuance, that I fear my flesh will not be able to hold out, nor my spirit to bear up, if thine hand abide thus heavy upon me. If this sin be not subdued in me, or that temptation removed, I fear I shall be turned aside from the paths of religion, and let go my hope." Thus from the kind, degree, or duration of our difficulties, we may draw arguments for relief.

2. The several perfections of the nature of God, are another head of arguments in prayer. "*For thy mercies sake, O Lord, save me; thy loving kindness is infinite,* let

this infinite loving kindness be displayed in my salvation. Thou art wise, O Lord, and though mine enemies are crafty, thou canst disappoint their devices: And thou knowest how by thy wondrous counsels to turn my sorrows into joy. Thou canst find out a way for my relief, when all creatures stand afar off and say, that they see no way to help me. Thou art almighty and all-sufficient; thy power can suppress my adversaries at once, vanquish the tempter, break the powers of darkness to pieces, release me from the chains of my corruption, and bring me into *glorious liberty*. Thou art just and righteous, and wilt thou let the enemy oppress for ever? Thou art sovereign, and all things are at thy command: Thou canst say to pains and diseases, go, or come; speak therefore the sovereign word of healing, and my flesh and soul shall praise thee. Thou delightest in pardoning grace; it is the honour of our God to forgive; therefore let my iniquities be all cancelled, through the abundance of thy rich mercy."

3. Another argument in pleading with God may be drawn from the several relations in which God stands unto men, particularly to his own people. "Lord, thou art my Creator, *wilt thou not have a desire to the work of thine hands? Hast thou not made me and fashioned me, and wilt thou now destroy me?* Thou art my Governor and my King; to whom should I fly for protection but to thee, when the enemies of thine honour and my soul beset me around? Art thou not my Father? and hast thou not called me one of thy children? and given me *a name and a place among thy sons and thy daughters?* Why should I look like one cast out of thy sight, or that belongs to the family of Satan? Are not the bowels of a father with thee, and tender compassions? Why should one of thy poor and weak helpless children be neglected or forgotten? Art thou not my God in covenant, and *the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom that covenant is ratified? Under that relation I would plead with thee for all necessary mercies."

4. The various and particular promises of the covenant of grace, are another rank of arguments to use in prayer. "*Enlighten me, O Lord*, and pardon me, and sanctify my soul; and bestow *grace and glory* upon me according to that word of thy promise *on which thou hast caused me to hope. Remember thy word* is past in heaven, it is recorded among the articles of thy sweet covenant, that I must receive light and love, and strength, and joy, and happiness? and art thou not a faithful God, to fulfil every one of those promises? What if *heaven and earth must pass away?* Yet thy covenant stands upon *two immutable* pillars, thy *promise* and thine *oath;* and now I have *fled for refuge to lay hold on this hope, let me have strong consolation. Remember the covenant* made with thy Son in the days of eternity, and let the mercies there promised to all his seed be bestowed upon me according to my various wants." This calling to remembrance the covenant of God, hath been often of great efficacy and prevalence in the prayers of the ancient saints.

5. The name and honour of God in the world, is another powerful argument. "*What wilt thou do for thy great name*, if Israel be cut off or perish? *Joshua* vii. 9. If thy saints go down to the grave in multitudes, *who shall praise thee in the land of the living? The dead cannot celebrate thee*, nor make mention of thy name and honours, *as I do this day*." This was the pleading of Hezekiah; *Isaiah* xxxviii. 18. And David uses the same language; Psalm vi. 5. *For thy name's sake*, was a mighty argument in all the ancient times of the church.

6. Former experiences of ourselves and others, are another set of arguments to make use of in prayer. O Lord Jesus Christ in that prophetical psalm, *Psalm* xxii. 5. is

represented as using this argument: "*Our fathers cried unto thee, O Lord, and were delivered, they trusted in thee, and they were not confounded;* let me be a partaker of the same favour whilst I cry unto thee, and make thee my trust: *Thou hast never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain;* and let it not be said that thy poor servant has now sought thy face, and has not found thee. Often have I received mercy in a way of return to prayer: Often hath my soul drawn near unto thee, and been comforted in the midst of sorrows: Often have I taken out fresh supplies of grace according to my need, from the treasures of thy grace that are in Christ; and shall the door of these treasures be shut against me now? Shall I receive no more favours from the hand of my God, that has heretofore dealt them so plentifully to me?" Now how improper soever this sort of argument may seem to be used in courts of princes, or to intreat the favour of great men, yet God loves to hear his own people make use of it; for though men are quickly weary of multiplying their bounties, yet the more we receive from God, if we humbly acknowledge it to him, the more we are like to receive still.

7. The most powerful and most prevailing argument, is the name and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. And though there be some hints or shadows of it in the Old Testament, yet it was never taught us in a plain and express manner, till a little before our Saviour left this world; John xvi. 23, 24. *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* This seems to be reserved for the peculiar pleasure and power of the duty of prayer under the gospel. We are taught to make mention of the name of Jesus, the only begotten and eternal Son of God, as a method to receive our biggest requests and fullest salvation: And in such language as this we should address the Father; "Lord, let my sins be forgiven for the sake of that love which thou bearest thine own Son, for the sake of that love which thy Son beareth to thee; for the sake of his humble state, when he took flesh upon him, that he might look like a sinner, and be *made a sacrifice, though himself was free from sin;* for the sake of his perfect and painful obedience, which has given complete honour to thy law; for the sake of *the curse which he bore,* and the death which he suffered, which hath glorified thine authority, and honoured thy justice more than it was possible for my sins to have affronted it: Remember his dying groans; remember his agonies when *the hour of darkness* was upon him; and let not the powers of darkness prevail over me: Remember the day when thou stoodest afar from thine own Son, and he cried out as one forsaken of God, and let me have thine everlasting presence with me; let me never be forsaken, since thy Son hath borne that punishment." Again, we may plead with God the intercession of Jesus our High-Priest above: "Father, we would willingly ask thee for nothing, but what thy Son already asks thee for: We would willingly request nothing at thine hands, but what thine own Son requests beforehand for us: look upon *the Lamb, as he had been slain, in the midst of the throne:* Look upon his pure and perfect righteousness, and that *blood with which our High-Priest is entered into the highest heavens, and in which for ever he appears before thee to make intercession;* and let every blessing be bestowed upon me, which that blood did purchase, and which that great, that infinite Petitioner pleads for at thy right hand. What canst thou deny thine own Son? for he hath told us, *that thou hearest him always.* For the sake of that Son of thy love, deny us not." Thus I have finished this fifth part of prayer, which consists in pleading with God.

SECTION VI.

OF PROFESSION, OR SELF-DEDICATION.

THE sixth part of prayer consists in a profession or self-dedication. This is very seldom mentioned by writers as a part of prayer; but to me it appears so very necessary in its nature, and so distinct from all the rest, that it ought to be treated of separately, as well as any other part; and may be divided under these four heads:

1. *A profession of our relation to God.* And it is worth while sometimes for a saint to draw near unto God, and to tell him that he is the Lord's; that he belongs to his family; that he is one of his household; that he stands among the number of his children; that his name is written in his covenant; and there is a great deal of spiritual delight and soul-satisfaction arises from such appeals to God concerning our relation to him.

2. *A profession of our former transactions with God.* "Lord, we have given ourselves up unto thee, and chosen thee for our eternal portion, and our highest good; we have seen the insufficiency of creatures to make us happy, and we have betaken ourselves to a higher hope; we have beheld Christ Jesus the Saviour in his perfect righteousness, and in his all-sufficient grace; we have put our trust in him, and we have made our covenant with the Father, by the sacrifice of the Son; we have often drawn near to thee in thine ordinances; we have ratified and confirmed the holy covenant at thy table, as well as been devoted to thee by the initial ordinance of baptism; we have given up our names to God in his house; and we have, as it were, *subscribed with our hands to be the Lord's.*"

3. *A present surrender of ourselves to God, and a profession of the present exercise of our several affections and graces towards him.* And this is sweet language in prayer, when the soul is in a right frame. "Lord, I confirm all my former dedications of myself to thee; and be all my covenantings for ever ratified. Or if I did never yet sincerely give myself up to the Lord, I do it now with the greatest solemnity, and from the bottom of my heart: I commit my guilty soul into the hands of Jesus my Redeemer, that he may sprinkle it with his atoning blood, that he may clothe it with his justifying righteousness, and make me, a vile sinner, accepted in the presence of a just and holy God: I appear, O Father, in the presence of thy justice and holiness, clothed in the garments of thine own Son, and I trust thou *beholdest not iniquity in me* to punish it. I give my soul, that has much corruption in it by nature, and much of the remaining power of sin, into the hands of my almighty Saviour, that by his grace he may form all my powers anew; that he may subdue every irregular appetite, and root out every disorderly passion; that he may frame me *after his own image*, fill me with his own grace, and fit me for his own glory. I hope in thee, my God, for *thou art my refuge, my strength, and my salvation:* I love thee above all things; and I know I love thee. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee:* I desire thee with my strongest affections, and I delight in thee above all delights: *My soul stands in awe, and fears before thee;* and I rejoice to love such a God who is almighty, and the object of my highest reverence."

4. A profession of our humble and holy resolutions to be the Lord's for ever. This is what is generally called a vow. Now, though I cannot encourage christians to bind themselves in particular instances by frequently repeated vows, and especially in things that are in themselves indifferent; which oftentimes prove a dangerous snare to souls: Yet we can never be too frequent, or too solemn in the general surrender of our souls to God, and binding our souls by a vow to be the Lord's for ever: *To love him above all things; to fear him, to hope in him, to walk in his ways,* in a course of holy obedience, and to wait for his mercy unto eternal life. For such a vow as this is, is included in the nature of both the ordinances of the gospel, baptism, and the Lord's-supper. Such a vow as this is, is comprehended almost in every act of worship, and especially in solemn addresses to God by prayer. I might add,

In the last place, that together with this profession or self-dedication to God, it is necessary we should renounce every thing that is inconsistent herewith, and that under each of these four preceding heads: "As I am thine, O Lord, and I belong not to this world: I have given myself to thee, and I have given myself away from sin and from the creature: I have renounced the world as my portion, and chosen the Father. I have renounced all other saviours, and all my own duties and righteousnesses as the foundation of my interest in the favour of God, and chosen *Christ Jesus, as my only way to the Father.* I have renounced my own strength as the ground of my hope; for my understanding is dark, my will is impotent, and my best affections are insufficient to carry me onwards to heaven: I now again renounce dependance upon all of them, that I may receive greater light and strength and love from God. *I am dead to the law,* I am mortified to sin, *I am crucified to the world,* and all by the cross of Jesus my Saviour. I bid Satan get him behind me; I renounce him and his works; I will neither fear him nor love him; nor lay a confederacy with the men of this world, for I love my God, for I fear my God, in my God is my eternal help and hope: *I will say, what have I to do any more with idols?* And I will banish the objects of temptation from my sight. Thus I abandon every thing that would divide me from God, to whom I have made a surrender of myself. And shouldest thou see fit to scourge and correct me, O my God, I submit to thine hand; shouldest thou deny me the particular requests I have presented to thee, I leave myself in thy hands, trusting thou wilt choose better for me. And because I know my own frailty of heart, and the inconstancy of my will, I humbly put all these my vows and solemn engagements into the hands of my Lord Jesus to fulfil them in me, and by me, through all the days of my infirmity and this dangerous state of trial."

SECTION VII.

OF THANKSGIVING.

THE seventh part of prayer consists in thanksgiving. To give thanks is to acknowledge the bounty of that hand whence we receive our blessings, and to ascribe honour and praise to the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God upon that account. And this is part of that tribute which God our King expects at our hands for all the favours we receive from him. It very ill becomes a creature to partake of benefits from his God, and then to forget his heavenly Benefactor, and grow regardless of that bounty whence

his comforts flow. The matter of our thanksgivings may be ranged under these two heads: We must give thanks for those benefits for which we have prayed, and for those which God hath conferred upon us without praying for.

1. Those benefits which God hath bestowed on us without asking, are proper to be mentioned in the first place, for they are the effects of his rich and preventing mercy: And how many are the blessings of his goodness with which he hath prevented us! "We praise thee, O Lord, for thine original designs of love to fallen man; that thou shouldest make a distinction between us and *the angels that sinned: What is man, that thou art thoughtful* about his salvation; and sufferest the angels to perish for ever without remedy: that thou shouldest choose a certain number of the race of Adam, and give them into the hands of Christ before all worlds, and make a covenant of grace with them in Christ Jesus, that their happiness might be secured, that thou shouldest reveal this mercy in various types and promises to our fathers by the prophets, and that in thine own appointed time thou shouldest send thy Son *to take our nature upon him, and to redeem us by his death?* We give glory to thy justice and to thy grace for this work of terror and compassion, this work of reconciling sinners to thyself by the punishment of thy Son: We praise thee for the gospel which thou hast published to the world, the gospel of pardon and peace; and that thou hast confirmed it by such abundant testimonies, to raise and establish our faith: We give glory to that power of thine that has guarded thy gospel in all ages, and through ten thousand oppositions of Satan has delivered it down safe to our age, and has proclaimed *the glad tidings of peace* in our nation: We bless thee that thou hast built habitations for thyself amongst us, and that we should be born in such a land of light as this is: It is a distinguishing favour of thine, that among the works of thy creation we should be placed in the rank of rational beings; but it is more distinguishing goodness, that we should be born of religious parents under the general promises of grace. We give thanks unto thy goodness for our preservation from many dangers which we could never foresee, and which we could not ask thee to prevent: How infinitely are we indebted to thee, O Lord, that thou hast not cut us off in a state of nature and sin, and that our portion is not at this time amongst *the children of* eternal *wrath!* That our education should be under religious care, and that we should have so many conveniences and comforts of life conferred upon us, as well as the means of grace brought near to us; and all this before we began to know thee, or sought any of the mercies of this life or the other at thine hands!"

2. We must give thanks for the benefits we have received as an answer to prayer. Whatsoever blessings we have sought at the hands of God, demand our acknowledgements to his goodness when we become receivers: And here there is no need to enlarge in particulars, for we may look back upon the fourth part of prayer, which consists in petition, and there read the matter of our thankfulness. There we learn to give glory to God for our deliverance from evils temporal and spiritual, and our hopes of deliverance from the evils that are eternal; for the communication of good for soul and body, and our comfortable expectation of the eternal happiness of both; for mercies bestowed on churches, on nations, on our governors, on relatives and our friends, as well as ourselves. And we should rejoice in our praises, and say to the Lord, *Verily thou art a God that hearest prayer, and thou hast not despised the cry of those that sought thee: we ourselves are witnesses, that thou dost not bid thy people seek thy face in vain.*

All these our thanksgivings may be yet further heightened in prayer by the consider-

ation of the mercies that we have received, of their greatness, and of their continuance: By the mention of the glory and self-sufficiency of God the giver, that he is happy in himself, and stands in no need of us, and yet he condescends to confer perpetual benefits upon us; that he is sovereign, and might dispose of his favours to thousands, and leave us out of the number of his favourites. That we are as vile and unworthy as others, and that our God beholds all our unworthiness, all our guilt, our repeated provocations, and his past mercies abused, and yet he continues to have mercy upon us, and waits to be gracious.

SECTION VIII.

OF BLESSING.

The eighth part of prayer consists in blessing of God, which has a distinct sense from praise or adoration, and is distinguished also from thanksgiving. In Psal. cxlv. 10. it is said, *All thy works praise thee, and thy saints bless thee,* that is, even the inanimate creation, which are the works of God, manifest his attributes and his praises, but his saints do something more, they *bless his name;* which part of worship consists in these two things:

1. In mentioning the several attributes and glories of God with inward joy, satisfaction, and pleasure. *We delight, O Lord, to see thy name honoured in the world, and we rejoice in thy real excellencies: We take pleasure to see thee exalted above all: We triumph in the several perfections of thy nature, and we give thanks at the remembrance of thine holiness.* Thus we rejoice and bless the Lord for what he is in himself, as well as for what he has done for us: And this is a most divine and unselfish act of worship.

2. Wishing the glories of God may for ever continue, and rejoicing at the assurance of it. *May the name of God be for ever blest: May the kingdom, and the power, and the glory be for ever ascribed to him: May all generations call him honourable, and make his name glorious in the earth. To thee, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, belong everlasting power and honour.*

SECTION IX.

AMEN, OR THE CONCLUSION.

WE are taught in several places of scripture to conclude our prayers with Amen; which is a Hebrew word that signifies truth, or faithfulness, certainly, surely, &c. and it implies in it these four things:

1. A belief of all that we have said concerning God and ourselves, of all our ascriptions of honour to God in the mention of his name, and attributes, and works, and a sensible inward persuasion of our own unworthiness, our wants and our sorrows, which we have before expressed.

2. A wishing and desiring to obtain all that we have prayed for, longing after it, and looking for it. *Lord, let it be thus as we have said,* is the language of this little word Amen in the end of our prayers.

3. A confirmation of all our professions, promises, and engagements to God: It is used as the form of the oath of God in some places in scripture, *verily or surely in blessing I will bless thee;* Heb. vi. 13, 14. And it is as it were a solemn oath in our lips, binding ourselves to the Lord, according to the professions that we have made in the foregoing part of worship.

4. It implies also the hope and sure expectation of the acceptance of our persons, and audience of our prayers. For while we thus confirm our dedication of ourselves to God, we also humbly lay claim to his accomplishment of the promises of his covenant, and expect and wait that he will fulfil all our petitions, so far as they are agreeable to our truest interest, and the designs of his own glory.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GIFT OF PRAYER.

HAVING already spoken of the nature of prayer, and distinguished it into its several parts, I proceed to give some account of the gift or ability to pray. This holy skill of speaking to God in prayer, hath been usually called a gift, and upon this account it hath been represented by the weakness and folly of some persons like the gift of miracles or prophecy, which are entirely the effects of divine inspiration, wholly out of our reach, and unattainable by our utmost endeavours. The malice of others hath hereupon taken occasion to reproach all pretences to it as vain fancies and wild enthusiasm. But I shall attempt to give so rational an account of it in the following sections, and lay down such plain directions how to attain it with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and his blessing on our own diligence and labour, that I hope those prejudices will be taken off, and the unjust reproach be wiped away for ever.

SECTION I.

WHAT THE GIFT OF PRAYER IS.

THE gift of prayer may be thus described: It is an ability to suit our thoughts to all the various parts and designs of this duty, and a readiness to express those thoughts before God in the fittest manner to profit our own souls, and the souls of others that join with us. It is called a gift, partly because it was bestowed on the apostles and primitive christians in an immediate, and extrordinary manner by the Spirit of God; and partly because there is the ordinary assistance of the Spirit of God required even to the attainment of this holy skill or ability to pray.

In the first propagation of the gospel it pleased the Spirit of God to bestow various powers and abilities on believers, and these were called *the gifts of the Spirit;* 1 Cor. xii. 4, 8, 9. Such were the gifts of *preaching*, of *exhortation*, of *psalmody*, that is, of making and singing of psalms, of *healing the sick*, of *speaking several tongues*, *&c.* Now, though these were given to men at once in an extraordinary way then, and the habits wrought in them by immediate divine power made them capable of exerting the several acts proper thereto on just occasions; yet these powers or abilities of speaking several tongues, of psalmody, of preaching and healing, are now to be obtained by human dili-

gence, with due dependance on the concurring blessing of God. And the same must be said concerning the gift or faculty of prayer.

As the art of medicine or healing is founded on the knowledge of natural principles, and made up of several rules drawn from the nature of things, from reason and observation; so the art of preaching is learned and attained by the knowledge of divine principles, and the use of rules and directions for explaining and applying divine truths; and so the holy skill of prayer is built on a just knowledge of God and ourselves, and may be taught in as rational a method by proper directions and rules. But because in a special manner we expect the aids of the Holy Spirit in things so serious and sacred, therefore the faculties of preaching and praying are called *the gifts of the Spirit* even to this day; whereas that word is not now-a-days applied to the art of medicine, or skill in the languages.

SECTION II.

OF FORMS OF PRAYER, OF FREE OR CONCEIVED PRAYER, AND PRAYING EXTEMPORE.

THE gift of prayer is one of the noblest and most useful in the christian life, and therefore to be sought with earnest desire and diligence; and in order to attain it, we must avoid these two extremes:

I. A confining ourselves entirely to precomposed forms of prayer.

II. An entire dependence on sudden motions and suggestions of thought.

I. The first extreme to be avoided is, a confining ourselves to set precomposed forms of prayer. I grant it lawful and convenient for weaker christians to use a form in prayer, rather than not perform that duty at all. Christ himself seems to have indulged it, to his disciples in their infant state of christianity; *Luke* xi. 1, 2, &c. I grant also that sometimes the most improved saints may find their own wants and desires, and the frames of their own hearts so happily expressed in the words of other men, that they cannot find better; and may therefore in a very pious manner use the same, especially when they labour under a present deadness of spirit, and great indisposition for the duty. It is also evident, that many assistances may be borrowed by younger and elder christians from forms of prayer well composed, without the use of the whole form as a prayer. And if I may have leave to speak the language of a judicious author that wrote more than forty years ago, I would say, with him, *That forms may be useful, and in some cases necessary:* For,

1. "Some, even among christians and professors, are so rude and ignorant, though it may be spoken to their shame, that they cannot tolerably express their desires in prayer; and must such utterly neglect the duty? Is it not better during their gross ignorance, to use the help of others gifts and composures, than not to pray at all? Or to utter that which is senseless and impious? I speak it not to excuse their ignorance, or that they should be encouraged to rest satisfied herein, but for the present necessity.

2. "Some again, though they can do it privately, and so far as may suffice in their secret addresses to God; yet when they are to pray before others, want either dexterity and fitness of expression, readiness of utterance, or confidence to use those abilities they have, whom yet I will not excuse from sinful bashfulness.

3. "It is possible, that some bodily distemper, or sudden distraction, may befall such as are otherwise able, which may becloud their minds, weaken their memories, and dull their parts, that they may be unfit to express themselves in extemporary conceptions. This may happen in case of melancholy, cold palsies, or the like distempers. I conclude then, that in the cases aforesaid, or the like, a form may be profitable and helpful. Nor is it a tying up the Spirit, but if conscionably used, may be both attended with the Spirit's assistance, and find acceptance with God. Yet it will not hence follow that any should satisfy themselves in such stated and stinted forms; much less, that those who have praying abilities, should be enforced by others to rest in them. If ignorance, bashfulness, defect of memory, or other distemper, may render it excusable and necessary to some, is it fit all should rest in their measure? Where then will be that *coveting earnestly the best gifts?* Or why should those that are excellently gifted that way, be hindered from the use and exercise of that gift, because others want it?" Thus far this worthy writer. Now though the use of forms in such cases be not unlawful, yet a perpetual confinement to them will be attended with such inconveniences as these:

1. It much hinders the free exercise of our own thoughts and desires, which is the chief work and business of prayer, *viz.* to express our desires to God: And whereas our thoughts and affections should direct our words, a set form of words directs our thoughts and affections; and while we bind ourselves to those words only, we damp our inward devotion, and prevent the holy fire from kindling within us; we discourage our active powers and passions from running out on divine subjects, and check the breathings of our souls heaven-ward. The wise man tells us, Prov. xiv. 10. *The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.* There are secret joys, and unknown bitternesses, which the holy soul longs to spread before God, and for which it cannot find any exact and correspondent expressions in the best of prayer-books: Now must such a christian suppress all those thoughts, and forbid himself all that sweet conversation with his God, because it is not written down in the appointed form?

2. The thoughts and affections of the heart that are truly pious and sincere, are wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and if we deny them utterance because they are not found in prayer-books, we run the danger of *resisting the Holy Ghost, quenching the Holy Spirit,* and fighting against the kind designs of God towards us, which we are so expressly cautioned against; 1 *Thess.* v. 19. and which a humble christian trembles to think of.

3. A confinement to forms, cramps and imprisons those powers that God hath given us for improvement and use; it silences our natural abilities, and forbids them to act; and it puts a bar upon our spiritual faculties, and prevents their growth. To satisfy ourselves with mere forms, to confine ourselves wholly to them, and neglect *to stir up and improve our own gifts,* is one kind of spiritual sloth, and highly to be disapproved. It is *hiding a talent in the earth,* which God has given us on purpose to carry on a trade with heaven. It is an abuse of our knowledge of divine things, to neglect the use of it in our converse with God. It is as if a man that had once used crutches to support him when he was feeble, would always use them? Or because he has sometimes found his own thoughts happily expressed in conversation by another person, therefore

he will assent to what that other person shall always speak, and never speak his own thoughts himself.

4. It leads us into the danger of hypocrisy and mere lip-service. Sometimes we shall be tempted to express those things which are not the very thoughts of our own souls, and so use words that are not suited to our present wants, or sorrows, or requests; because those words are put together, and made ready beforehand.

5. The confinement of ourselves to a form, though it is not always attended with formality and indifference, yet it is very apt to make our spirits cold and flat, formal and indifferent in our devotion. The frequent repetition of the same words doth not always awaken the same affections in our hearts, which perhaps they were well suited to do when we first heard or made use of them. When we continually tread one constant road of sentences, or track of expressions, they become like an old beaten path in which we daily travel, and we are ready to walk on without particular notice of the several parts of the way; so in our daily repetition of a form we neglect due attention to the full sense of the words. But there is something more suited to awaken the attention of the mind in a conceived prayer; when a christian is making his own way toward God, according to the present inclination of his soul, and urgency of his present wants: And to use the words of a writer lately cited, *While we are clothing the sense of our hearts in fit expressions, and as it were digging the matter of our prayers out of our own feelings and experiences, it must needs keep the heart closer at work.*

6. The duty of prayer is very useful *to discover to us the frame of our own spirits;* but a constant use of forms will much hinder our knowledge of ourselves, and prevent our acquaintance with our own hearts, which is one great spring of maintaining inward religion in the power of it. Daily observation of our own spirits would teach us what our wants are, and how to frame our prayers before God; but if we tie ourselves down to the same words always, our own observation of our hearts will be of little use, since we must speak the same expressions, let our hearts be how they will. As therefore an inward search of our souls, and intimate acquaintance with ourselves, is a means to obtain the gift of prayer, so the exercise of the gift of prayer will promote this self-acquaintance, which is discouraged and hindered by the restraint of forms.

In the last place, I mention the most usual, most evident and convincing argument against perpetual confinement of ourselves to a form; and that is, because it renders our converse with God very imperfect: For it is not possible that forms of prayer should be composed, that are perfectly suited to all our frames of spirit, and fitted to all our occasions in the things of this life, and the life to come. Our circumstances are always altering in this frail and mutable state. We have new sins to be confessed, new temptations and sorrows to be represented, new wants to be supplied. Every change of providence in the affairs of a nation, a family, or a person, requires suitable petitions and acknowledgments. And all these can never be well provided for in any prescribed composition. I confess all our concerns of soul and body may be included in some large and general words of a form, which is no more suited to one time, or place, or condition, than to another: but generals are cold and do not affect us, nor affect persons that join with us, and whose case he that speaks in prayer should represent before God. It is much sweeter to our own souls, and to our fellow worshippers, to have our fears, and our doubts, and complaints, and temptations, and sorrows represented in most exact and particular expressions, in such language as the soul itself feels when the words are

spoken. Now, though we should often meet with prayers precomposed, that are fitted to express our present case, yet the gift of prayer is as much better than any form, as a general skill in the work of preaching is to be preferred to any precomposed sermons; as a perfect knowledge in the art of physic, is better than any number of receipts; or as a receipt to make a medicine, is preferable to one single medicine already made. But he that binds himself always to read printed sermons, will not arrive at the art of preaching; and that man that deals only in receipts, shall never become a skilful physician; nor can the gift of prayer be attained by everlasting confinement to forms.

Perhaps it may make stronger impressions on some persons, and go further towards the cure of their confinement to forms, and their prejudices against the gift of prayer, to hear what a bishop of the church of England has said on this matter, "In the use of such prescript forms, to which a man hath been accustomed, he ought to be narrowly watchful over his own heart, for fear of that lipservice and formality, which in such cases we are more especially exposed unto.—For any one so to set down and satisfy himself with his book-prayer, or some prescript form, and to go no further, this were still to remain in his infancy, and not to grow up in his new nature: this would be, as if a man, who had once need of crutches should always afterwards make use of them, and so necessitate himself to a continual impotency.—Prayer by book, is commonly of itself something flat and dead, floating for the most part too much in generalities, and not particular enough for each several occasion. There is not that life and vigour in it, to engage the affections, as when it proceeds immediately from the soul itself, and is the natural expression of those particulars whereof we are most sensible.—It is not easy to express, what a vast difference a man may find, in respect of inward comfort and satisfaction, betwixt those private prayers that are thus conceived from the affections, and those prescribed forms which we say by rote, or read out of books." Bishop Wilkins, in his Gift of Prayer.

II. Another extreme to be avoided by all that would obtain the gift of prayer, is, a neglect of preparation for prayer, and an entire dependence on sudden motions and suggestions; as though we were to expect the perpetual impression of the Holy Spirit upon our minds, as the apostles and inspired saints: as though we had reason to hope for his continual impulses, both in the matter, and manner, and words of prayer, without any forethought, or care, or premeditation of our own. It is true indeed, that when a man hath premeditated the matter of his prayer, and the method of it never so exactly he ought not so to confine himself, as to neglect or check any warm and pious desires that may arise in his heart in the midst of the duty. But this doth not hinder, but that it is lawful and proper by all useful means, to endeavour in general to learn the holy skill of praying, and to prepare also by meditation, or reading, or holy conversation, for the particular exercise of this gift, and the performance of this duty.

Some persons imagine, that if they use no form, they must always pray extempore, or without any premeditation, and are ready to think all free or conceived prayer is extemporary; but these things ought to be distinguished. *Conceived* or *free prayer* is, when we have not the words of our prayer formed beforehand, to direct our thoughts, but we conceive the matter or substance of our addresses to God, first in our minds, and then put those conceptions in such words and expressions as we think most proper. And this may be done by some work of meditation, before we begin to speak in prayer; partly with regard to the thoughts, and partly the expressions too. *Extemporary prayer*

is, when we, without any reflection or meditation before hand, address ourselves to God, and speak the thoughts of our hearts, as fast as we conceive them. Now this is most properly done in that which is called *ejaculatory prayer*, when we lift up our souls to God in short breathings of request or thanksgiving, in the midst of any common affairs of life. But there may be also some other occasions for it: *viz.*

1. I grant, that in secret prayer, there is not the same degree of premeditation necessary, as in public: For there a person takes a greater liberty to express his thoughts and the desires of his soul, just as they rise within him, which may be very significant to awaken and maintain his own affections in that duty, though perhaps they would be very improper and disagreeable in public.

2. I grant also, that persons of better natural parts, of a lively temper, or ready expression, of great heavenly-mindedness, or such as have been long exercised and experienced in this work, are not bound to premeditate all the materials and methods of their prayer in daily worship in a family; nor are ministers, whose graces and talents have been well improved, obliged to think over all the substance of every public address to God beforehand. A short recollection of thought may supply such persons with matter for those constant returns of worship. Nor are christians who are possessed of such endowments, at any time bound to an equal degree of premeditation as others are. Bishop Wilkins very pertinently tells us, *The proportion of gifts that a man hath received is the measure of his work and duty in this case.* Yet upon some great and solemn occasions, public and private, when seasons are set apart for prayer, a regular premeditation is very useful and advantageous to persons of the highest attainments.

3. I grant further, that there may be several calls of providence, which may demand such sudden addresses to God, even from persons of less skill and experience; and they have then reason to hope for more especial assistance from the Spirit of God, while they obey the call of present and necessary duty. But I am ready to suspect that some persons, who are unskilled in praying, and yet cry out against premeditation, do indulge a degree of spiritual sloth, that secretly prevails upon them, while they profess to be afraid of any thing that comes near to a form.

The arguments that may incline and encourage younger christians to prepare their thoughts for prayer beforehand are these:

1. The common reason of man and light of nature teach us, that an affair of such solemnity and importance, which requires our utmost care to perform it well, cannot be done without some forethought. The skill of a christian in the inward exercise of grace, is to be learned and improved by forethought and diligence; and much more in the external performance of a religious duty. Now if the light of nature leads us to it, and scripture no where forbids, why should we not pursue the practice? The words of scripture seem to encourage such a premeditation, when it tells us, *we should not be rash with our mouth, nor let our heart be hasty to utter any thing before God;* Eccles. v. 2.

2. That the heart should be prepared for prayer, is certainly necessary; *the preparation of the heart* is frequently spoken of in the word of God: now the heart cannot be prepared for any act of worship, without some degree of premeditation. What is the use of *reading the word of God* just before prayer, in our families? Why are we so often advised *to recollect the sermons we hear* when we retire for prayer, but that by premeditation we may be better fitted with materials for this duty?

3. There can be no such thing as learning to pray in a regular way without it. The distinction of the nature of prayer into its several parts, adoration, confession, petition, is all useless, if we must not think before-hand. The excellent rules that ministers lay down to teach us to pray, are mere trifling, if we must not think beforehand. If we may not consider, what our sins are, what our wants, and what our mercies, before we speak in prayer, there is no possibility of ever learning to perform this part of christian worship with any tolerable measure of decency or profit. An utter aversion to think beforehand, whatever the pretences are, will be a most effectual bar against the attainment of the gift of prayer in any considerable degree.

4. Due preparation for prayer is the way to serve God with our best. But for younger christians, unskilled in this work, to rush always into the presence of God in solemn prayer, without due forethought, even when there is time allowed for it; and to pour out words before God at all adventures, is no sign of that high reverence which they owe to so awful a majesty, before whom *angels veil their faces, who is jealous of his own worship, and abhors the sacrifice of fools.*

If we utterly neglect preparation, we shall be ready to fall into many inconveniences. Sometimes we shall be constrained to make long and indecent stops in prayer, not knowing what to say next. At other times we shall be in danger of saying those things that are very little to the purpose, and of wandering far from our purposed subject and design, which can never be acceptable to God, And sometimes when the mind is not regularly furnished, the natural spirits are put into a hurry, and we run into a confused, incoherent, and impertinent rhapsody of words, whereby both God may be dishonoured, and our own edification and the edification of others spoiled; while the Spirit of God stands afar off from us for a season; it may be, on purpose to reprove our negligence of a wise and holy care to learn to pray.

Some such unhappy practices as these in the last age have given great offence to the pious, and been a stumbling-block and scandal to the profane. The wicked and profane world have taken occasion from hence to throw loads of reproach on all conceived prayer, under the name of praying extempore, and have endeavoured to render all prayer without books and forms as odious as possible under this name. The more sober and pious part of the church of England, that usually worship God by liturgies and pre-composed forms, have been too ready to give ear to these reproaches, and have by this means been confirmed in their confinement to liturgies and prayer-books; they have been hardened hereby against attempting to seek the gift of prayer themselves, and been tempted to oppose and censure those who have attained it. No small share of this public scandal will be found at the door of those few bold, ignorant, and careless men, who have been guilty of such rash and thoughtless addresses to God, under a pretence of *praying by the Spirit.*

In opposition to this practice of premeditation, some pious and sincere christian may say, *I have now and then meditated many things which I designed to speak in prayer; but when I came to pray, I found my thoughts enlarged beyond all my preparations, and carried away to dwell in prayer upon subjects and petitions of a very different kind, and in a much more lively manner to express my thoughts than I had before conceived.* Now I would persuade such a person to receive this divine assistance, not as an argument to neglect premeditation for the future, but as a reward of his diligence in preparing his heart beforehand for this work.

Another christian will tell me, that sometimes when he has thought over many materials for his prayer before, he has found a greater confusion in his mind between his former preparations and his present suggestions, than if he prayed in an extemporary way. In reply to this objection, I must confess that I have sometimes had the same unhappy experience: But I impute it to one of these three defects: Either my premeditation was very slight and imperfect, as to the matter or method; so that I had not ranged the materials of my prayer in any settled form and order in my memory, but left them almost as much at uncertainty, as new thoughts that might occur to my mind in praying. And it is more troublesome sometimes to mend and finish what is very imperfect, than to make entirely new. Or perhaps my premeditation had been chiefly the work of my head, without so due a consultation of the frame of my heart. I had prepared my head, but not my heart for prayer; and then it is no wonder that when the heart comes to be warmly engaged in praying, it runs far away from the mere premeditations of the head; and sometimes betwixt both, create a confusion in the mind.

3. Or it may be, my soul hath been out of frame, and indisposed for prayer; and then I would not lay the fault upon premeditation, which would have been as bad or worse without it. But where my preparation both of head and heart hath been carefully and wisely managed, I have had several experiences of the conveniency and usefulness of it, especially in my younger years, and upon some extraordinary and solemn occasions.

After all, if some particular persons have conscientiously, and with due diligence, attempted this way, and find they always pray more usefully, and more honourably, with more regularity and delight, by the mere preparation of the heart for this duty, without fixing the parts and method of their prayer in their memory beforehand, they must follow those methods of devotion themselves, which they have found most effectual to attain the best ends; but not forbid the use of premeditation to others, whom God hath owned and approved in that way. And let this be observed, that it is but a few christians that attain so great a readiness and regularity in the gift of prayer, without learning by premeditation; far greater is the number of those whose performances are very mean, for want of thinking beforehand.

Having thus endeavoured to secure you from these two dangerous extremes, *viz.* a perpetual confinement to forms on the one hand, and a neglect of all premeditation on the other; I proceed. In the gift of prayer, we are to consider these five things: The *matter*, the *method*, the *expression*, the *voice*, and the *gesture*. I shall treat of each of these at large.

SECTION III.

OF THE MATTER OF PRAYER.

First, It is necessary to furnish ourselves with proper matter, that we may be able to hold much converse with God; to entertain our souls and others agreeably and devoutly in worship; to assist the exercise of our own graces and others, by a rich supply of divine thoughts and desires in prayer, that we may not be forced to make too

long and indecent pauses whilst we are performing that duty; nor break off abruptly as soon as we have begun, for want of matter; nor pour out abundance of words to dress up narrow and scanty sense, for want of variety of devout thoughts. I shall therefore, first, propose some rules in order to furnish ourselves with proper matter for prayer; and then lay down some directions concerning these materials of prayer, with which our souls are furnished. Rules to furnish us with matter are these:

I. Rule. *Labour after a large acquaintance with all things that belong to religion; for there is nothing that relates to religion, but may properly make some part of the matter of our prayer.* This is therefore the most general advice, and the most universal rule that can be given in this case, let us daily seek after a more extensive and a more affecting knowledge of God and of ourselves: A great acquaintance with God in his nature, in his persons, in his perfections, in his works, and in his word, will supply us with abundant furniture for invocation, adoration, and praise, thanksgiving and blessing; and will suggest to us many arguments in pleading with God for mercy. An intimate acquaintance with ourselves, and a lively sense of our own frames of spirit, our wants, our sorrows and our joys, will also supply us with proper thoughts for confession, for petition, and for giving thanks. We should acquaint ourselves therefore with the word of God in a great degree; for it is there he reveals himself to us, and there he discovers us also to ourselves. *Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you in all wisdom,* that you may be furnished with petitions and praises.

We should also be watchful observers of the dealings of God with us in every ordinance and in every providence, and know well the state of our own souls. We should observe the working of our hearts towards God, or towards the creature, and call ourselves to account often, and often examine our temper and our life, both in our natural, our civil and religious actions. For this purpose, as well as upon many other accounts, it will be of great advantage to keep by us in writing some of the most remarkable providences of God, and instances of his anger or mercy towards us, and some of our most remarkable carriages towards him, whether sins, or duties, or the exercises of grace. Such observations and remarks in our daily walking with God, will be a growing treasury to furnish us for petition and praise. This seems to be the meaning of those scriptures where we read of *watching unto prayer;* Eph. vi. 18. and 1 Pet. iv. 7. This will make us always ready to say something to God in prayer, both concerning him and concerning ourselves. Let our judgments be constantly well stored, and our graces and affections be lively, and lead us to the duty, and for the most part some proper matter will naturally arise, and flow with ease and pleasure.

II. Rule. Let the nature of this duty of prayer, as divided into its several parts, be impressed upon your hearts, and dwell in your memories. Let us always remember that it contains in it these several parts of worship, namely, *invocation, adoration, confession, petition, pleading, profession, or self-resignation, thanksgiving, and blessing;* which that we may retain the better in our minds, may be summed up in these four lines:

> Call upon God, adore, confess,
> Petition, plead, and then declare
> You are the Lord's, give thanks and bless,
> And let Amen confirm the prayer.

And by a recollection of these several parts of prayer, we may be assisted to go on step

by step, and to improve in the gift of performance of this part of worship. It would tend also to improve the gift of prayer, if such persons as have time and capacity would set down all these parts of prayer as common places, and all the observable passages that occur in reading the holy scripture, or other authors; or such passages as we hear delivered in prayer that are very affecting to our souls, should be written down and registered under those heads. This would preserve such thoughts and expressions in our memories, which have had a peculiar quickening influence upon us. Bishop Wilkins in his Treatise of Prayer, has given us such collections of scripture, and Mr. Henry, in a late book, has furnished us with a great many more, and judiciously ranged under their proper subjects.

III. Rule. *Do not content yourselves merely with generals, but if you would be furnished with larger supplies of matter, descend to particulars, in your confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings.* Enter into a particular consideration of the attributes, the glories, the graces, and the relations of God. Express your sins, your wants and your sorrows, with a particular sense of the mournful circumstances that attend them; it will enlarge your hearts with prayer and humiliation, if you confess the aggravations that increase the guilt of your sins, *viz.* whether they have been committed against knowledge, against the warnings of conscience, &c. It will furnish you with large matter for thankfulness, if you run over the exalting and heightening circumstances of your mercies and comforts, *viz.* That they are great, and spiritual, and eternal, as well as temporal: That they were granted before you sought them, or as soon as asked, &c. And let your petitions and your thanksgivings in a special manner be suited to the place and circumstances of yourselves, and those that you pray with, and those that you pray for. Our burdens, our cares, our wants, and sins are many; so are our mercies also, and our hopes, so are the attributes of our God, his promises and his graces; if we *open our mouths wide, he will fill and satisfy us with good things,* according to his word. If generals were sufficient for us, one short form would make all others needless; it would be enough to express ourselves in this manner to God. *O Lord, thou art great and good, but we are vile sinners, give us all the mercies we stand in need of for time and for eternity, for the sake of Jesus Christ; and through him accept all our thanksgivings for whatsoever we have and hope for: To the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be eternal glory. Amen.*

This is a most general and comprehensive prayer, and includes in it every thing necessary: But there is no christian can satisfy his soul, to go from day to day to the mercy-seat, and say nothing else but this. A saint in a right frame loves *to pour out his soul before God* in a hundred particulars; and God expects to see his children sensibly affected with their own special wants, and his peculiar mercies, and to take notice of the lesser, as well as of the more considerable circumstances of them. *Let us not be straitened in ourselves then,* for the hand of God and his heart are not straitened. Our Lord Jesus bids us ask, *and promises it shall be given;* Matt. vii. 7. The apostle Paul bids us *in every thing by prayer and supplication to make known our requests to God;* Phil. iv. 6. And the apostle James tells us, *we receive not, because we ask not;* James iv. 2.

IV. Rule. In order to furnish our minds with matter for prayer, it is very convenient at solemn seasons of worship to read some part of the word of God, or some spiritual treatise written by holy men, or to converse with fellow-christians about divine things, or to spend some time in recollection or meditation of things that belong to reli-

gion. This will not only supply us with divine matter, but will compose our thoughts to a solemnity: Just before we engage in that work, we should be absent a little from the world, that our spirits may be freer for converse with God; we may borrow matter for prayer from the word which we read, from inward reflections of our own souls, as well as from holy conferences; and many a saint hath found this true, that *while he mused, the fire burned within him;* Psalm xxxix. 3. and while we speak to men about the affairs of religion and inward piety, we shall certainly find something to say to God.

V. Rule. If we find our hearts, after all, very barren, and hardly know how to frame a prayer before God of ourselves, it has been oftentimes useful to take a book in our hand, wherein are contained some spiritual meditations in a petitionary form, some devout reflections, or excellent patterns of prayer; and above all, the psalms of David, some of the prophecies of Isaiah, some chapters in the gospels, or any of the epistles. Thus we may lift up our hearts to God in secret, in short requests, adorations or thanksgivings, according as the verses or paragraphs we read are suited to the case of our own souls. This has obtained the name of *mixed-prayer;* of which there is a farther account under the fifth head of the last chapter. This many christians have experienced as a very agreeable help, and of great advantage in their secret retirement; that when they could not of themselves speak a prayer to God, they could yet interline what they read with holy breathings towards God with fervent petitions; and by this means they have found their souls warmed, and oftentimes in the sight of God have performed this duty more agreeably in this method than other persons of a larger and more extensive gift with greater furniture of matter, and much fluency of language. Nor can I disapprove of what Bishop Wilkins says concerning secret prayer, *viz. That it is not always necessary here that a man should still keep on in a continued frame of speech; but in private devotions a man may take a greater freedom both for his phrase and matter: he may sometimes be at a stand, and make a pause, there may be intermissions and blank spaces in respect of speech, wherein by meditation he may recover new matter to continue in this duty.*

VI. Rule. If you find your heart so very dry and unaffected with the things of religion, that you can say nothing at all to God in prayer, that you have no divine matter occurs to your thoughts, go and fall down humbly before God, and tell him with a grievous complaint, that you can say nothing to him, that you can do nothing but groan and cry before him; go and tell him, that without his Spirit you cannot speak one expression, that without immediate assistances from his grace, you cannot proceed in this worship; tell him humbly, that he must lose a morning or evening sacrifice, if he condescend not to send down fire from heaven upon the altar. Plead with him earnestly for his own Spirit, if it be but in the language of sighs and tears; beg that he would never suffer your heart to be so hard, nor your soul to be so empty of divine things: that he would not only now, but at all times, furnish you for so glorious a work as this of converse with himself; and *God knows the mind of his own Spirit, and he hears those groanings that cannot be uttered,* and he understands their language, when the soul is as it were imprisoned, and shut up that it cannot vent itself; our heavenly Father *hears the groans of the prisoner;* Psalm cii. 20. And there hath been glorious communion maintained with God before the end of that season of worship, when at the beginning of it the saint could say nothing else but, *Lord, I cannot pray.*

Let it be noted here, that when there is such a heaviness and deadness upon the spirit, such a coldness or distraction in this worship, and such an averseness and

reluctance in the mind, it ought to be a matter of humiliation, and deep self-abasement before God; especially when at any time we are sensible that it is owing to our own negligence, or to some late guilt brought upon the conscience. Earnestly we should beg pardon for it; and as Bishop Wilkins says, *What we want in the degrees of our duty, we should be sure to make up in humility, and this will be the most proper improvement of our failings, when we can strengthen ourselves by our very infirmities.* I proceed now to lay down some directions concerning the matter of our prayers, how to manage it right.

I. Direction. Do not think it absolutely necessary to insist upon all the parts of prayer in every address to God; though in our stated and solemn prayers there are but few of them that can be well left out. What we omit at one time, we may perhaps pursue at another with more lively affection, that so we may fulfil all our errands at the *throne of grace.* But let us be sure to insist most upon those things which are warmest in our own hearts, especially in secret; and this is a good advice, even in social prayers, when those things which we are deeply affected with, are such as the company that joins with us may properly be concerned in too. Also let those parts of prayer have the largest share in the performance, for which our spirit is best prepared, and with which it is most sensibly imprest at the present season; whether it be adoration, petition, confession, or thanksgiving. This will not only furnish us with matter, but will keep our spirits lively in the work, and will be the best means to affect those that join with us, and to call their graces into exercise. Those things indeed which our fellow-worshippers cannot be concerned in, are better laid aside till we come to speak to God alone.

II. Direction. Suit the matter of your prayer to the special occasion of each particular duty, to the circumstances of the time, place, and persons, with, and for whom, you pray. This will be another spring of matter, and will direct you to the choice of proper thoughts and language for every part of prayer.

1. The time. If it be morning, then we adore God as *the watchful shepherd of Israel, that slumbers not, nor sleeps.* Then we confess our inability to have defended ourselves through all the hours of darkness, while nature and our active powers lie as it were useless and dead: then we give thanks to him, that he hath secured us from the spirits of darkness, and given us rest in measure, and raised us in peace; *I laid me down and slept,* with comfort, *I awoke, for the Lord sustained me;* Psalm iii. 5. Then we petition for divine counsel in all the affairs of the day, and the presence of God with us, through all the cares, businesses, dangers and duties of it. In the evening we give thanks to God for the mercies of the day, for which we offered our petitions in the morning: We confess the sins and follies of the day, and humble our souls before God; we petition for proper mercies the succeeding night; with expressions of adoration, confession, and self-resignation, suited to the time; *Psalm.* iv. 8. *I will lie down in peace, O Lord, and sleep; for thou only makest me to dwell in safety.* Thus when we pray before or after meat: Thus on the Lord's-day, or our common days of business; in a time of war or peace; a season of public or private rejoicing; a day of trouble or humiliation: Let the several expressions of our prayer, in the various parts of it, be suited to the particular season.

2. The place, and the persons. If in our secret retirements, then we adore God in this language, *O Lord God, who seest in secret, who knowest the way that I take, thou hast commanded that thy children should seek thee in their closets, and thou hast promised to reward them openly.* Here also we ought to confess our more particular sins, which

the world knows not, and pour out our whole souls before God, with great freedom and plainness: Tell him all our follies, our infirmities, our joys and sorrows; our brightest hopes, and our most gloomy and dismal fears, and all the inward workings of our hearts, either towards himself, or towards the creatures. Then we converse with God aright in prayer, when we, as it were, maintain a divine friendship with him in secret, and in our humble addresses hold correspondence with him as our heavenly and condescending Friend.

When we pray in a family, the matter must be suited to the circumstances of the household, in confession of family-sins, petitions and thanksgivings for family-mercies; whether those with whom we live are sick or in health; whether they are in distress or in peace; whether fixed in their habitations, or removing: And our language to God ought to be suited to this variety of conditions.

If we pray among a select society of christians, we draw near unto God with holy boldness, something like what we use in our duties of secret worship; we have reason to take more freedom among those that are *fellow-saints*, and whose hearts have felt many of the same workings with our own. Then when our faith is lively, we should give thanks to God *for our election in Christ Jesus, for the atonement and righteousness of the Son of God*, in which we humbly hope to have an interest; *for the enlightening and sanctifying work of his own Spirit upon our hearts; for our expectations of eternal glory:* And by expressing the joys of our faith to God, we may often be made a means, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, to raise the faith and joy of others.

In public worship, or family devotions, where saints and sinners are present, a minister, or a christian that speaks in prayer, should consider the circumstances of the whole congregation, or family, and plead for suitable mercies. But I think he should not be ashamed to express his faith and hope when he speaks to God, where there are many to join with him in that holy language, though every single hearer cannot heartily join and consent. Perhaps this may be a way to make unconverted persons, that are present, blush, and be ashamed, and be inwardly grieved; that they are forced to leave out many of the expressions of prayer used by the minister, and are convinced in themselves, and confounded, because they cannot join in the same language of faith and hope, joy and thankfulness. For it is not necessary that every worshipper should lift up his soul to God according to every sentence spoken in social prayer, but only in such as are suited to his own case and state, and such as he can sincerely speak to God himself.

III. *Do not affect to pray long, for the sake of length, or to stretch out your matter by labour and toil of thought, beyond the furniture of your own spirit.* God is not the more pleased with prayers, merely because they are long, nor are christians ever the more edified. It is much better to make up by the frequency of our devotions what we want in the length of them, when we feel our spirits dry, and our hearts straitened. We may also cry to God for the aids of his own Holy Spirit, even in the middle of our prayer, to carry us forward in that work: but every man is not fit to pray long. God has bestowed a variety of natural, as well as spiritual talents and gifts upon men; nor is the best, christian, or a saint of the greatest gifts, always fit for long prayers; for hereby he may fall into many inconveniences; the inconveniences of affected length in prayer, are these:

1. Sometimes a person is betrayed by an affectation of *long prayers*, into crude, rash and unseemly expressions, in the presence of God; such as are unworthy of his divine

Majesty, and unbecoming our meanness: Sometimes he is forced into impertinent digressions, and wanders away from the subject in hand, till his thoughts again recover themselves: And true spiritual worship is hereby hindered and corrupted. We shall rather therefore take the advice of Solomon upon this account; *Eccles.* v. 2. *Be not rash to utter any thing before God; God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.*

2. We are tempted hereby to tautologies, to say the same things over and over again, which our Saviour highly blames; *Matt.* vi. 7. *When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.* Sometimes indeed in the midst of our warm affections in prayer, we are delightfully constrained to a repetition of the same words, through mere fervency of spirit; and there are instances of it in scripture: But for the most part our repetitions are such as evidence not the fervency, but the barrenness of our minds, and the slightness of our frame.

3. Again, we shall be in danger, through an affectation of length, of tiring those that join with us; especially when a prayer is drawn out to many words, with much dulness and deadness of spirit, and without an agreeable variety of thought. I confess, when the spirit is poured in plentiful degrees upon men, and upon some extraordinary occasions, persons have continued for an hour or two together, with a delightful variety of matter and expression, and instead of toil and labour to hold on, they found it difficult to break off; their souls have been all the while near to God, and they have held the attention of those that join with them, and kept their devotion warm. Our fathers have seen and felt it; but that spirit is much departed in our day; and there are seldom found amongst us any great lengths of prayer, with equal affection and devotion, maintained either in ourselves or others, through so long a duty.

4. We are tempted also sometimes by this means to exceed the season that is allotted for us in prayer, especially where others are to succeed in the same work: or else we intrench, it may be, upon other parts of worship that are to follow; hereby some of our fellow-worshippers are made uneasy; and when persons are under a necessary engagement to be elsewhere by an appointed time, or to be engaged in other duties, the latter part of their devotion is generally spoiled. It may be remarked here, that even when *Jacob wrestled with the angel, he was required to let him go, for it was break of day;* Gen. xxxii. 26. As we must not make one duty to thrust out another, so neither should we manage any duty so, as to make it a hard task to ourselves, or a toil to others, but a pleasure and spiritual entertainment to both.

5. I might add, in the last place, that by this excessive affectation of length in prayer, without an equal degree of the spirit of prayer and lively devotion, some imprudent christians have given too much occasion to the profane scoffers of the age; and hereby the wicked of the earth have rendered these methods of converse with God ridiculous among their own company, and have exposed and reproached the gift and spirit of prayer, because of our irregular performance of that part of worship: Whereas when the Spirit of God, by his own immediate and uncommon influences, draws out the heart to continue in prayer, these inconveniences will not follow. Therefore, while I am discouraging young christians from that affectation of long prayers, which arises from an ostentation of their parts, from a superstitious hope of pleasing God better by saying many words, or from a trifling frame of spirit; I would not have my readers imagine

that the shortest prayers are always the best. Our sinful natures are too ready to put off God in secret or in the family, with a few minutes of worship, from mere sloth and weariness of holy things; which is equally to be blamed: For hereby we omit a great part of the necessary work of prayer in confessions, petitions, pleadings for mercy, or thanksgivings. Nor do I think that prayer in public assemblies should be so short, as though the only design of it were a mere preface before the sermon, or a benediction after it. Whereas social prayer is one considerable part, if not the chief duty of public worship; and we ought generally to continue so long in it, as to run through the most necessary and important purposes of a social address to the throne of grace. Christian prudence will teach us to determine the length of our prayers agreeably to the occasion and present circumstances, and according to the measure of our own ability for this work.

SECTION IV.

OF THE METHOD OF PRAYER.

I PROCEED now to the second thing to be considered in the gift of prayer, and that is *method*. Method is necessary to guide our thoughts, to regulate our expressions, and dispose of the several parts of prayer in such an order as is most easy to be understood by those that join with us, and most proper to excite and maintain our own devotion and theirs. Though there is not a necessity of the same just and exact regularity here, as in preaching the word, yet a well regulated prayer is most agreeable to men, honourable in the sight of the world, and not at all the less pleasing to God. The Spirit of God, when he is poured out *as a spirit of prayer* in the most glorious measures, doth not contradict the rules of a natural and reasonable method, although his methods may have infinite variety in them.

Some method must be used in order to secure us from confusion, that our thoughts may not be ill sorted, or mingled and huddled together in a tumultuary and unseemly manner. This will be of use also to prevent tautologies or repetitions of the same thing, when each part of prayer is disposed into its proper place: this will guard us against roving digressions, when we have ranged our thoughts in order throughout every step of our prayer: Our judgment infers what sort of matter properly and naturally follows that which we are at present speaking: so that there is no need to fill up any empty spaces with matter that is not proper, or not suited to the purpose. Those persons that profess to pray without observing any method at all, if they are very acceptable and affecting to others in their gift, do certainly use a secret and a natural method, and proper connexions of one thing with another, though they themselves have not laid down any rule to themselves for it, nor take notice of the order of their own prayers. The general rules of method in prayer, which I would recommend to you, are these three:

I. Let the general and the particular heads in prayer be well distinguished, and usually let generals be mentioned first, and particulars follow: As for example, in adoration we acknowledge, that God is all over glorious in his nature, self-sufficient and all-sufficient, and we mention this with the deepest reverence, and universal abasement of soul: and then we descend to praise him for his particular attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, &c. and exercise our particular graces accordingly. So in confession, we first acknow-

ledge ourselves vile sinners, corrupt by nature, and of the same sinful mass with the rest of mankind, and then we confess our particular iniquities, and our special guilt. So in our petitions, we pray first for the churches of Christ all over the world, and his interest and his gospel throughout the earth, and then we petition for the churches in this nation, in this city, or that particular church of Christ to which we belong. Sometimes indeed there is a beauty also in summing up all the particulars at last in one general; as when we have praised God for his several perfections to the utmost of our capacity, we cry out, *Lord, thou art exalted above all our praises; thou art altogether great and glorious.* Or, when we have confessed several particular sins, we fall down before God, as persons that are all over defiled and guilty. When we have petitioned for particular mercies, we then ask that God *who is able to do for us above what we can ask or think,* that he would bestow all other comforts, and every blessing that he knows needful for us. But still this rule must be observed, that general and particular heads ought to be so distinguished, as to make our method of prayer natural and agreeable.

II. Let things of the same kind, for the most part be put together in prayer. We should not run from one part to another, by starts and sudden wild thoughts and then return often to the same part again, going backward and forward in confusion: this bewilders the mind of him that prays, disgusts our fellow worshippers, and injures their devotion. This will lead us into *vain repetitions,* and we shall lose ourselves in the work. Yet I would give this limitation, that sometimes the same matter may come in naturally, under two or three parts of prayer, and be properly disposed of in two or three places by a judicious worshipper. As the mention of some of the attributes of God under the head of *adoration,* where we praise him for his own perfections: and under the head of *pleading for mercy,* when we use his power, his wisdom, or his goodness as an argument to enforce our petitions; and under the head of *thanksgiving* also, when we bless him for the benefits that proceed from his goodness, his power, or his wisdom; so in the beginning of a prayer in our invocation of God, we put in a sentence or two, of confession of our unworthiness, and of petition for divine assistance: so towards the conclusion of prayer, it is not amiss to use a sentence or two consisting of such matter as may leave a suitable impression upon our minds, though perhaps something of the same matter may have been before mentioned: as, to ask forgiveness of all the imperfections of our holy things: To entreat that God would hear all our requests in the name of our Lord Jesus: to recommend our prayers into the hands of our Redeemer, our great High-Priest, and to commit our whole selves to the conduct of divine grace, till we are brought safe to glory. But then all this must be done with such a variety of expression, and with some proper connexions, as will render it agreeable in itself, and will entertain the minds of those that join with us, and give them delight rather than hinder their devotion.

III. Let those things, in every part of prayer, which are the proper objects of our judgment, be first mentioned, and then those that influence and move our affections; not that we should follow such a manner of prayer as is more like preaching, as some imprudently have done, speaking many divine truths without the form or air of prayer: It is a very improper custom, which some persons have taken up and indulged, when divine truths come to be mentioned in prayer, they run great lengths in a doctrinal way; yet there is occasion frequently in prayer, under the several parts of it, for the recollect-

ing of divine truths, and these lay a proper foundation for warm and pathetical expressions to follow. As, *O Lord, thou art good, and thou dost good; why should I continue so long without partaking of thy goodness? My sins are great, and my iniquities have many aggravations; O that I might mourn for them before thee in secret! O that I could pour out my soul before thee in sorrow because of multiplied offences!* Thus let the language of affection follow the language of our judgment, for this is the most rational and natural method.

Having laid down these general rules, the best particular method I can direct you to, is, that division of the parts of prayer mentioned in the foregoing chapter. I know not a more natural order of things than this is. To begin with invocation, or calling upon God; then proceed to adore that God whom we invoke, because of his various glories we are then naturally led to the work of confession, considering what little contemptible creatures we are in the presence of so adorable a God, and to humble ourselves, because of our abounding sins, and our many necessities: When we have given praise to a God, of such holiness, and having spread our wants before God, petitions for mercy naturally follow, and pleading with such divine arguments as the Spirit and the word of God put into our mouths, should accompany our requests; after all, we resign ourselves into the hands of God, and express our self-dedication to him: Then we recollect the mercies we have received, and out of gratitude pay him our tribute of honour and thanks. And as he is glorious in himself, and glorious in his works of power and grace, so we bless him, and ascribe everlasting glory to him. I cannot but think it a very useful thing for young beginners in the work of prayer to remember all these heads in their order, to dispose of their thoughts and desires before God in this method, proceeding regularly from one part to another. And as this must needs be useful to assist and teach us to pray in public, so sometimes in our secret retirements it may not be improper to pursue the same practice.

Yet it must be granted, there is no necessity of confining ourselves to this, or to any other set method, no more than there is of confining ourselves to a form in prayer. Sometimes the mind is so divinely full of one particular part of prayer, perhaps of thanksgiving, or of self-resignation, that high expressions of gratitude, and of devoting ourselves to God, break out first. *Lord, I am come to devote myself to thee in an everlasting covenant, I am thine through thy grace and through thy grace I will be thine for ever.* Or thus, *Blessed be thy name, O Lord God Almighty, for thine abundant benefits, that fill my soul with the sense of them, for thou hast pardoned all my iniquities, and healed all my diseases.* Sometimes, even in the beginning of a prayer, when we are insisting on one of the first parts of it, we receive a divine hint from the Spirit of God, that carries away our thoughts and our whole souls with warm affection into another part that is of a very different kind, and that usually perhaps comes in near the conclusion: And when the Spirit of God thus leads us, and our souls are in a very devout frame, we are not to *quench the Spirit of God*, in order to tie ourselves to any set rules of prescribed method.

There is no necessity that persons of great talents, of divine affections, of much converse with God, and that have attained to a good degree of this gift by long exercise, should bind themselves to any one certain method of prayer. For we find the prayers recorded in holy scripture are very various in the order and disposition of them, as the Spirit of God and the divine affections of those saints led and guided them: But still there is some method observed, and may be traced and demonstrated. I am persuaded, that if

young christians did not give themselves up, in their first essays of prayer, to a loose and negligent habit of speaking every thing that comes uppermost, but attempted to learn this holy skill, by a recollection of the several parts of prayer, and disposing their thoughts into this method, there would be great numbers in our churches that would have arrived at a good degree of the gift of prayer, and be capable afterwards of giving a more glorious and unbounded loose to their souls, without breaking the rules of just and natural method; and that to the great edification of our churches, as well as of their own families.

SECTION V.

OF EXPRESSION IN PRAYER.

III. The third thing that relates to the gift of prayer, is expression. Though prayer be the proper work of the heart, yet in this present state, in secret as well as in social prayer, the language of the lips is an excellent aid in this part of worship. A person indeed may pray heartily and effectually, and yet make use of no words: sometimes the desires of the heart may be too big to be expressed, when the Spirit of God is with us in plentiful operations, and assists us to plead with sighs and *groans which cannot be uttered*, as Rom. viii. 26. Persons that are dumb may think over their wants, and raise their souls to God in longing desires and wishes for grace in a time of need: Nor is there any necessity of using language upon God's account, for he knows the desires of our hearts, and our most secret breathings towards him. He that hears without ears, understands us without our words. Yet as language is of absolute necessity in social prayer, that others may join with us in our addresses to God; so for the most part we find it necessary in secret too: For there are few persons of so steady and fixed a power of meditation, as to maintain their devotion warm, and to converse with God, or with themselves profitably, without words.

Expressions are useful, not only to dress our thoughts, but sometimes to form and shape, and perfect the ideas and affections of our minds. The use of words makes us doubly sensible of the things we conceive. They serve to awaken the holy passions of the soul as well as to express them. Our expressions sometimes follow and reveal the warmer motions of the heart, and sometimes they are dictated by the judgment, and are a means to warm the heart, and excite those holy motions. They fix and engage all our powers in religion and worship, and they serve to regulate as well as to encrease our devotion. We are bid to *take unto us words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously:* Hosea xiv. 2. And in the psalms of David, we often read of his *crying to the Lord with his voice,* and *making supplication with his tongue,* when the matter of his prayer is such, that we have abundant reason to believe that it was performed in secret. Here I shall first lay down some directions how to attain a rich treasure of expression in prayer. And secondly, give several rules about the choice and use of words and expressions. The directions to attain a treasure of expressions, are these.

I. Besides the general acquaintance with God and with yourselves, that was prescribed under a former head, labour after the fresh, particular and lively sense of the greatness and grace of God, and of your own wants, and sins, and mercies, whenever you

come to pray. This will furnish you with abundance of proper expressions. The passions of the mind, when they are moved, do mightily help the tongue. They *fill the mouth with arguments.* They give a natural eloquence to those who know not any rules of art; and they almost constrain the dumb to speak. There is a remarkable instance of this in ancient history, when Atys the son of Crœsus the king, who was dumb from his childhood, saw his father ready to be slain, the violence of his passion broke the bonds wherewith his tongue was tied, and he cried out to save him. Beggars that have a pinching sense of hunger and cold, and find out variety of expressions to tell us their wants, and to plead for relief. Let our spiritual senses therefore be always awake and lively, and our affections always warm, and lead the duty; then words will follow in a greater or less degree.

II. Treasure up such expressions especially as you read in scripture, and such as you have found in other books of devotion, or such as you have heard fellow-christians make use of, whereby your own hearts have been sensibly moved and warmed. Those forms of speaking, that have had great influence and success upon our affections at one time, may probably have a like effect also at other seasons; if so be we take care not to confine ourselves to them constantly, lest formality and thoughtlessness should grow thereby.

Though the limitation of ourselves to a constant set form of words be justly disapproved; yet there is great use of serious, pious, and well-composed patterns of prayer, in order to form our expressions and furnish us with proper praying language. And I wish the assistances that might be borrowed thence, were not as superstitiously abandoned by some persons, as they are idolized by others. But I suppose no persons will disapprove the advice, if I desire them to remember the more affectionate sentences in the psalms of David, and the complaints of Job, and other holy men, when they breathe out their souls to God in worship. These in a nearer and more particular sense may be called *the words which the Holy Spirit teacheth;* and whenever they suit our circumstances, they will always be pleasing to God: Besides, they are such as christians are most acquainted with, and pious souls are most affected with them. The Spirit of God in praying and preaching will often bless the use of his own language: And I am persuaded, this is one way whereby *the Spirit helps our imfirmities*, and becomes *a Spirit of supplication* in us, by suggesting to us particular passages of scripture, that are useful to furnish us both with matter and expression in prayer.

The most authentic judge of fine thoughts and language that our age has produced, assures us of the beauty and glory of the style of scripture, and particularly in this respect, that it is most proper to teach us how to pray. I cannot forbear transcribing this paragraph from the *Spectator, June* 14, 1712. "It happens very well, says he, that the Hebrew idioms run into the English tongue with a peculiar grace and beauty: Our language has received innumerable elegancies and improvements from that infusion of hebraisms, which are derived to it out of the poetical passages of holy writ; they give a force and energy to our expressions, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intent phrases, than any that are to be met with in our own tongue; there is something so pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often sets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead, saith he, doth a prayer appear that is composed in the most elegant and polite forms of speech which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by that solemnity of phrase which may be drawn from the sacred writings? It has been said by some of the ancients, that if the

gods were to talk with men, they would certainly speak in Plato's style; but I think we may say with justice, that when mortals converse with their Creator, they cannot do it in so proper a style as that of the holy scripture."

It would be of excellent use to improve us in the gift of prayer, if in our daily reading the word of God we did observe what expressions were suited to the several parts of this duty: adoration, confession, petition, or thanksgiving: And let them be wrought into our addresses to God that day. Nay, if we did but remember one verse every day, and fix it into our hearts by frequent meditation, and work it into our prayers morning and evening, it would in time grow up to a treasure of divine sense and language, fit to address our Maker upon all occurrences of life. And it has been observed, that persons of mean capacity, and no learning, have attained to a good measure of this holy skill of prayer, merely by having their minds well furnished with words of scripture; and have been able to pour out their hearts before God in a fluency of proper thoughts and language, to the shame of those that have been blessed with brighter parts, and have enjoyed the advantage of a learned education. Yet I would lay down two cautions about the use of scripture-language.

One is, That we should not affect too much to impose an allusive sense upon the words of scripture, nor use them in our prayers in a signification very different from the true meaning of them. Not that I would utterly disallow and condemn all such allusive expressions; as for instance, that which is frequently used when we desire mercies for our souls and bodies, to ask the blessings of *the upper and the nether springs*, There may be some such phrases used pertinently enough: The commonness of them also makes them something more agreeable; yet if we affect to shew our wit or ingenuity by seeking pretty phrases of scripture, and using them in an allusive sense, very foreign to the original purpose of them, we shall be in danger of leading ourselves into many mistakes in the interpretation of scripture, and expose ourselves sometimes to the peril of mistaking the true sense of a text, by having frequently fixed a false meaning upon it in our prayers.

Another caution, in using scripture language, is this, that we abstain from all those expressions which are of a very dubious sense, and *hard to be understood;* if we indulge the use of such dark sentences in our speaking to God, we might as well *pray in an unknown tongue*, which is so much disapproved by the apostle; 1 *Cor.* xiv. 9, 14. Let not therefore the pomp and sound of any hard Hebrew names, or obscure phrases in scripture, allure us to be fond of them in social prayer, even though we ourselves should know the meaning of them, lest we confound the thoughts of our fellow-worshippers.

III. Be always ready to engage in holy conference, and divine discourse. This will teach us to speak of the things of God. Let it be your delightful practice to recollect and talk over with one another the sermons you have heard, the books of divinity you have been conversant with, those parts of the word of God you have lately read, and especially your own experiences of divine things. Hereby you will gain a large treasure of language to clothe your pious thoughts and affections. It is a most profitable practice, after you have heard a sermon, to confer with some fellow-christian that heard it too, and run over all the particulars of it that you can retain in your memory; then retire, and pray them over again, that is, make them the matter and substance of your address to God; plead with him to instruct you in the truths that

were mentioned, to incline you to perform the duties recommended, to mourn over and mortify the sins that were reproved, to teach you to trust and live upon the promises and comforts proposed, and to wait and hope for the glories revealed in that sermon. Let this be done frequently afterwards in the same week, if the sermon be suited to your case and condition of soul. This will furnish you incredibly with riches of matter and expression, for the great duty of prayer. The reasons why we want expressions in prayer, is many times because we use ourselves so little to speak about the things of religion, and another world. A man that hath but a tolerable share of natural parts, and no great volubility of speech, learns to talk well upon the affairs of his own trade and business in the world, and scarce ever wants words to discourse with his dealers: And the reason is, because his heart and his tongue are frequently engaged therein. Thus if our affections are kept warm, and we use ourselves frequently to speak of the things of religion to men, we shall learn to express ourselves much better about the same divine concerns when we come before God.

IV. Pray earnestly for the gift of utterance, and seek the blessing of the Spirit of God upon the use of proper means to obtain a treasure of expressions for prayer. The great apostle prays often for a freedom of speech and utterance in his ministry, that he *may speak the mystery of Christ, and make it manifest so as he ought to speak;* Col. iv. 3, 4. So the gift of utterance in prayer, is a very fit request to be made to God for the advantage of our own souls, and those that join with us. The wise man tells us, in Prov. xvi. 1. *That the preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.* Let us pray then, that when God hath prepared our heart for his worship, he would also teach our tongue to answer the thoughts and desires of the heart, and to express them in words suitable and answering to all our inward spiritual affections. A happy variety of expression, and holy oratory in prayer, is one of these *good and perfect gifts that come from above, from God the Father of lights* and knowledge; *James* i. 17. The rules about the choice and use of proper expressions in prayer are these:

I. Choose those expressions that best suit your meaning, that most exactly answer the ideas of your mind, and that are fitted to your sense and apprehension of things. For the design of prayer is to tell God the inward thoughts of your heart; if you speak therefore what is not in the heart, though the words be never so fine and pathetical, it is but a mere mockery of God. Let your tongues be the true interpreters of your minds. When our souls are filled with a lively impression of some of the attributes, or works of God, when our hearts are overpowered with a sense of our own guilt and unworthiness, or big with some important request; O what a blessed pleasure is it to hit upon a happy expression, that speaks our very soul, and fulfils all our meaning! And what a pleasure doth it convey to all that join with us, *who have their spiritual senses exercised?* And it helps to excite in them the same devotion that dictated to us the words we speak: The royal preacher; in Eccles. xii. 10. *Sought out, and gave good heed to find, and to set in order, acceptable words* in his sermons, that they might *be as goads and nails fastened by the master of assemblies:* That is, that they might leave a strong and lasting impression on those that hear, that by piercing deep into the heart as goads, they may be fixed as nails. And there is the same reason for the choice of proper words in prayer.

II. Use such a way of speaking, as may be most natural and easy to be understood,

and most agreeable to those that join with you. The apostle gives this direction to the Corinthians, concerning their public worship; 1 *Cor.* xiv. 9. *Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.* Avoid therefore all foreign and uncommon words, which are borrowed from other languages, and not sufficiently naturalized, or which are old and worn out of use. Avoid those expressions which are too philosophical, and those which savour too much of mystical divinity. Avoid a long train of dark metaphors, or of expressions that are used only by some particular violent party-men. Avoid length and obscurity in your sentences, and in the placing of your words; and do not interline your expressions with too many parentheses, which cloud and entangle the sense. And here I beg leave to give one or two instances of each of these improper methods of speaking: Not that ever I heard these very phrases used by any ministers or private christians in prayer. But as vices of the life are rendered most hateful, and are best cured or prevented by seeing them represented in the plainest and most odious colours; so the vices of speech, and improprieties of expression are best avoided by a plain representation of them in their own complete deformity. This will deter us from coming near them, and make us watchful against all those forms of speaking that border upon these follies. And indeed, without giving examples of each of these faults, I know not how to make the unlearned christian understand the things he ought to avoid.

By uncommon words, I mean such as are either too new, or too old for common use. Old and *obsolete words* are such as these; *we do the to wit*, for, we acquaint thee. *Leasing*, for lying. *A gin*, for a snare. Some such words as these yet stand in our translation of the Bible; many of these you may find in the old translation of the psalms in the common-prayer book, and in the metre of Hopkins and Sternhold; which might be proper in the age when they were written, but are now grown into contempt. *New words* are for the most part borrowed from foreign languages, and should not be used in social prayer, till they are grown so common, that there appears no difficulty to the hearers, nor affectation in the speaker. Such as these, which have a French original: *Thou, O Lord art our dernier resort*, that is, our last refuge. The whole world is but one great *machine* managed by thy *puissance*, that is, an engine managed by thy power. We are *chagrin*, because of the hurries and *tentations* of the *malign* spirit, that is, We are vexed and grow uneasy by reason of the temptations of the devil. Or these, which are borrowed from the Latin: The *beatific splendors* of thy face *irradiate* the *celestial* region, and *felicitate* the saints: There are the most *exuberant profusions* of thy grace, and the *sempiternal efflux* of thy glory.

By *philosophical expressions*, I intend such as are taught in the academical schools, in order to give learned men a shorter and more comprehensive view of things, or to distinguish nicely between ideas that are in danger of being mistaken without such distinction. As for instance, it is not proper to say to God in public prayer, Thou art *hypostatically* three, and *essentially* one. By the *plenitude* of perfection in thine *essence*, thou art self-sufficient for thine own existence and *beatitude;* who in an *incomplex manner eminently* though not *formally*, includest all the infinite variety of *complex ideas* that are found among the creatures. Such language as this may be indulged perhaps in secret, by a man that uses himself to think and meditate under these forms; but his meaner fellow-christians would no more be edified by them, than by praying in an unknown tongue. By

the language of *mystical divinity*, I mean such incomprehensible sort of phrases, as a sect of divines among the papists have used, and some few protestants too nearly imitated. Such are of the *deiform fund* of the soul, the *superessential life, of singing a hymn of silence.* That God is an *abyss of light, a circle whose centre is every where, and his circumference no where.* That hell is the dark world made up of *spiritual sulphur*, and other ingredients *not united or harmonized*, and without that *pure balsamical oil* that flows from the heart of God. These are *great swelling words of vanity*, that captivate silly people into raptures, by the mere sound without sense.

By running long *metaphors*, I mean the persuing of a similitude or metaphor, and straining so far, as to injure the doctrines of religion by a false sense, or very improper expressions. Such was the language of a foolish writer, who bids us give our hearts to the Lord, cut them with the *knife of contrition*, take out *the blood of your sins* by confession, afterward *wash it with satisfaction, &c.* By expressions that savour too much of *party-zeal*, I mean such as would be useless, if not offensive, to christians of different judgments that join with us in prayer: We should not in our prayers too much insist on the corruptions of doctrine and worship in any church, when some of that communion join with us; nor of the infants' interest in the covenant of grace, and baptism the first seal of it, when baptists are worshipping with us together. Our prayers should not savour of anger and uncharitableness, for we are bid to *lift up holy hands without wrath;* 1 Tim. ii. 8.

When I recommend such expressions as are *easy to be understood*, it is evident that you should avoid long and entangled sentences, and place your thoughts and words in such an order, as the heart of the hearers may be able to receive and join in the worship, as fast as their ears receive the words: As in all our conversations and conferences, and discourses, we should labour to make every thing we say to be understood immediately; so especially in prayer, where the affections should be moved, which cannot well be done if the judgment must take much pains to understand the meaning of what is said.

III. Let your language be grave and decent, which is a medium between magnificence and meanness. Let it be plain, but not coarse. Let it be clean, but not at all lofty and glittering. Job speaks of *choosing his words to reason with God;* Job ix. 14. Some words are choice and beautiful, others are unseemly and disagreeable. Have a care of all wild, irregular and vain expressions, that are unsuited to so solemn a part of worship. The best direction I can give you in this case, is to make use of such language as you generally use in your serious discourses upon religious subjects, when you confer with one another about the things of God. For then the mind is composed to gravity, and the tongue should answer and interpret the mind. The language of a christian in prayer, is the clothing of his thoughts, or the dress of the soul; and it should be composed like the dress of his body, decent and neat, but not pompous or gaudy; simple and plain, but not careless, uncleanly or rude.

Avoid therefore glittering language, and affected style. When you address God in worship, it is a fault to be ever borrowing phrases from the theatre and profane poets. This does not seem to be *the language of Canaan.* Many of their expressions are too light, and wild, and airy for so awful a duty. An excessive fondness of elegance and finery of style in prayer, discovers the same pride and vanity of mind, as an affectation of many jewels and fine apparel in the house of God: It betrays us into a neglect of our hearts, and of experimental religion, by an affectation, to make the nicest speech, and

say the finest things we can, instead of sincere devotion, and praying in the Spirit. Besides, if we will deal in lofty phrases, scripture itself sufficiently abounds with them; and these are the most agreeable to God, and most affecting to his own people.

Avoid mean and coarse and too familiar expressions, such as excite any contemptible or ridiculous ideas, such as raise any improper or irreverent thoughts in the mind, or base and impure images; for these much injure the devotion of our fellow-worshippers. And it is a very culpable negligence to speak to God in such a rude and unseemly manner, as would ill become us in the presence of our fellow-creatures, when we address ourselves to them. Not but that God hears the language of the meanest soul in secret, though he is not capable of expressing himself with all the decencies that are to be desired; yet it is certain, that we ought to seek to furnish ourselves with becoming methods of expression, that so our performance of this duty may be rendered pleasing to those with whom we worship, and there is no necessity of being rough and slovenly, in order to be sincere. Sometimes persons have been guilty of great indecencies, and exposed religion to profane scoffs, by a too familiar mention of the name of Christ, and by irreverent freedoms when they speak to God. I cannot approve of the phrases of *rolling upon Christ*, of *swimming upon Christ to dry land*, of *taking a lease of Christ for all eternity*. I think we may fulfil that command of coming *boldly to the throne of grace* without such language, that can hardly be justified from rudeness and immodesty. Persons are sometimes in danger of indecencies, in borrowing mean and trivial, or uncleanly similitudes: They rake all the sinks of nastiness to fetch metaphors for their sins, and praying for the coming of Christ, they fold up the heavens like an old cloak, and shovel days out of the way. By these few instances you may learn what to avoid; and remember that words, as well as things, grow old and uncomely; and some expressions, that might appear decent threescore years ago, would be highly improper, and offensive to the ears of the present age. It is therefore no sufficient apology for these phrases, that men of great learning and most eminent piety have made use of them.

IV. Seek after those ways of expression that are pathetical, such as denote the fervency of affection, and carry life and spirit with them; such as may awaken and exercise our love, our hope, our holy joy, our sorrow, our fear, and our faith, as well as express the activity of those graces. This is the way to raise, assist, and maintain devotion. We should therefore avoid such a sort of style as looks more like preaching, which some persons that affect long prayers have been guilty of to a great degree. They have been speaking to the people, and teaching them the doctrines of religion, and the mind and will of God, rather than speaking to God the desires of their own minds. They have wandered away from God to preach to men. But this is quite contrary to the nature of prayer; for prayer is our own address to God, declaring our sense of divine things, and pouring out our hearts before him with warm and proper affections. And there are several modes of expression that promote this end. As,

1. Exclamations, which serve to set forth an affectionate wonder, a sudden surprize, or violent impression of any thing on the mind. Psalm lxxxi. 19. *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* Psalm cxxxix. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God, how great is the sum of them!* Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?*

2. Interrogations, when the plain sense of any thing we declare unto God is turned

into a question, to make it more emphatical and affecting. Psalm cxxxix. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence?* Ver. 21. *Do I not hate them that hate thee?* Rom. vii. 14. *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

3. Appeals to God, concerning our own wants or sorrows, our sincere and deep sense of the things we speak to him. John xxi. 17. *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* So David appeals to God, Psalm lxix. 5. *My sins are not hid from thee.* Psalm lvi. 8. *Thou tellest all our travels, or our wanderings; are not my tears in thy book?* Job x. 7. *Thou knowest that I am not wicked: My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high;* Job xvi. 19.

4. Expostulations, which are indeed one particular sort of interrogation, and are fit to express not only deep dejections of the mind, but to enforce any argument that is used in pleading with God, either for mercy for his saints, or the destruction of his enemies. Isaiah lxiii. 15, 17. *Look down from heaven, behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory, where is thy zeal and thy strength? The sounding of thy bowels and thy mercies towards me, are they restrained? O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* Isaiah li. 9, 10. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord: Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it that hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep?* Psalm lxxvii. 8. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?* Psalm lxxx. 4. *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry?* Psalm xliv. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction?* God invites his people thus to argue with him; Isaiah i. 18. *Come, now let us reason together, saith the Lord.* And holy men, in humble and reverent expostulations, have with many reasons pleaded their cause before God, and their words are recorded as our patterns.

5. Options, or wishes, fit to set forth serious and earnest desires; Job vi. 8. *O that I might have my request!* Psalm cxix. 5. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!*

6. Apostrophes, that is, when in the midst of our addresses to God we turn off the speech abruptly to our own souls, being led by the vehemence of some sudden devout thought. So David in the beginning of the xvi. Psalm, *Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said to the Lord, thou art my Lord, &c.* In meditations, psalms, hymns, or other devotional compositions, these apostrophes may be longer and more frequent; but in prayer they should be very short, except when the speech is turned from one person of the blessed Trinity to another, thus; "Great God, hast thou not promised that thy Son should have *the heathen for his inheritance, and that he should rule the nations?* Blessed Jesus, how long ere thou assume this kingdom? when wilt thou send thy Spirit to enlighten and convert the world? When, O eternal Spirit, wilt thou come and shed abroad thy light and thy grace, through all the earth?"

7. Ingeminations, or redoubling our expressions, which argue an eager and inflamed affection. Psalm xciv. 1, 2. *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.* Psalm cxxx. 6. *My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning.* And the conclusion of Psalm lxxii. is, *Blessed be the Lord for evermore, Amen and Amen.* But here let us take care to distinguish between those repetitions that arise from real fervency of spirit, and those that are used merely to lengthen out a prayer, or that arise from mere barrenness of heart, and want of matter. It is far better, at least in public prayer, to yield to our present indisposition, and shorten the duty,

than to fill up our time with constant repetitions; such as, *O Lord our God; if it be thy blessed will; we intreat thee; we beseech thee; O Lord, have mercy upon us!* For though some of these expressions may be properly enough repeated several times in a prayer, yet filling up every empty space, and stretching out almost every sentence with them, is not agreeable to our fellow-worshippers, nor an ornament, nor a help to our devotion, or theirs.

V. Do not always confine yourselves to one set form of words to express any particular request, nor take too much pains to avoid an expression, merely because you used it in prayer heretofore. Be not over fond of a nice uniformity of words, nor of perpetual diversity of expression in every prayer. It is best to keep the middle between these two extremes. We should seek indeed to be furnished with a rich variety of holy language, that our prayers may always have something new, and something entertaining in them, and not tie ourselves to express one thing always in one set of words, lest this make us grow formal and dull, and indifferent in those petitions. But, on the other hand, if we are guilty of a perpetual affectation of new words, which we never before used, we shall sometimes miss our own best and most spiritual meaning, and many times be driven to great impropriety of speech; and at best, our prayers by this means will look like the fruit of our fancy, and invention, and labour of the head, more than the breathings of the heart. The imitation of those christians and ministers that have the best gifts, will be an excellent direction in this, as well as in the former cases.

SECTION VI.

OF THE VOICE IN PRAYER.

IV. The fourth thing to be considered in the gift of prayer, is the voice. Though the beauty of our expressions, and the tuneableness of our voice, can never render our worship more acceptable to God, the infinite Spirit; yet our natures, being composed of flesh and spirit, may be assisted in worship by the harmony of the voice of him that speaks. Should the matter, method, and expressions be never so well chosen in prayer, yet it is possible for the voice to spoil the pleasure, and injure the devotion of our fellow-worshippers. When speeches of the best composure, and the warmest language, are recited in a cold, harsh, or ungrateful way, the beauty of them is almost lost. Some persons, by nature, have a very sweet and tuneful voice, that whatsoever they speak appears pleasing. Others must take much more pains, and attend with diligence to rules and directions, that their voice may be formed to an agreeable pronunciation: For we find by sad experience, that all the advantages that nature can obtain or apply to assist our devotions, are all little enough to keep our hearts from wandering, and to maintain delight: At least it is a necessary duty to know and avoid those disagreeable ways of pronunciation, that may rather disgust than edify such as join with us. I confess, in secret prayer there is no necessity of a voice; for God hears a whisper as well as a sigh and a groan. Yet some christians cannot pray with any advantage to themselves without the use of a voice in some degree; nor can I judge it at all improper, but rather preferable, so that you have a convenient place for secrecy: For hereby you will not only excite your own affections the more, but by practice in secret, if you take due care of your voice there, you may learn also to speak in public the better. The great and general rule I would lay down for managing the voice in prayer is this; let us use

the same voice with which we usually speak in grave and serious conversation, especially upon pathetical and affecting subjects. This is the best direction that I know, to regulate the sound as well as the words. Our own native and common voice appears most natural, and may be managed with greatest ease. And some persons have taken occasion to ridicule our worship, and to censure us as hypocrites, when we fondly seek and affect any new and different sort of sounds or voices in our prayers. The particular directions are such as these:

I. Let your words be all pronounced distinct, and not made shorter by cutting off the last syllable, nor longer, by the addition of hems and o's, of long breaths, affected groanings, and useless sounds, of coughing or spitting, &c. which some have heretofore been guilty of, and have sufficiently disgraced religion. If you cut off and lose the last syllable of your word, or mumble the last words of the sentence, and sink in your voice, so that others cannot hear, they will be ready to think it is because you did not speak properly, and so were afraid to be heard. If on the other hand you lengthen out your sentences with ridiculous sounds, you endanger the devotion even of the wisest and best of your fellow-worshippers, and expose the worship to the profane raillery of idle and corrupt fancies. While you seem to be designing to rub off the roughness of your throat, or to express greater affection by such methods, others will suspect that it is a method only to prolong your sentences, to stretch your prayers to an affected length, and to recover your thoughts what to say next. Therefore, when your passions happen to be elevated with some lively expression in prayer, and you are delightfully constrained to dwell upon it; or when you meditate to speak the next sentence with propriety; it is far better to make a long pause, and keep a decent silence, than to fall into such indecencies of sound.

II. Let every sentence be spoken loud enough to be heard, yet none so loud as to affright or offend the ear. Between these two extremes there is a great variety of degrees in sound, sufficient to answer all the changes of our affections, and the different sense of every part of our prayer. In the beginning of prayer especially, a lower voice is more becoming, both as it bespeaks humility and reverence, when we enter into the presence of God, and as it is also a great conveniency to the organs of speech not to arise too high at first; for it is much harder to sink again afterwards, than to rise to higher accents, if need require. Some persons have got a habit of beginning their prayers, and even upon the most common family occasions, so loud as to startle the company; others begin so low in a large assembly, that it looks like secret worship, and as though they forbid those that are present to join with them. Both these extremes are to be avoided by prudence and moderation.

III. Observe a due medium between excessive swiftness and slowness of speech, for both are faulty in their kind. If you are too swift, your words will be hurried on, and will (as it were) intrude upon one another, and be mingled in confusion. It is necessary therefore to observe a due distance between your words, and a much greater distance between your sentences, that so all may be pronounced distinct and intelligible. Due and proper pauses and stops will give the hearer time to conceive and reflect on what you speak, and more heartily to join with you, as well as give you leave to breathe, and make the work more easy and pleasant to yourselves. Besides, when persons run on heedless with an incessant flow of words, being carried as it were in a violent stream, without rests or pauses, they are in danger of *uttering things rashly before God*, giving

no time at all to their own meditation, but indulging their tongue to run sometimes too fast for their own thoughts, as well as for the affections of such as are present with them. And hence it comes to pass, that some persons have begun a sentence in prayer, and been forced to break off and begin anew: Or if they have pursued that sentence, it has been with so much inconsistency, that it could hardly be reduced to sense or grammar; which has given too sensible an occasion to others to ridicule all conceived prayer, and has been very dishonourable to God and his worship. All this arises from a hurry of the tongue into the middle of a sentence, before the mind has conceived the full and complete sense of it.

On the other hand, if you are too slow, and very sensibly and remarkably so, this will also grow tiresome to the hearers, while they have done with the sentence you spoke last, and wait in pain, and long for the next expression, to exercise their thoughts, and carry on their devotion. This will make our worship appear heavy and dull. Yet I must needs say, that an error on this hand in prayer is to be preferred before an excess of speed and hurry, and its consequences are less hurtful to religion. In general, with regard to the two foregoing directions, let the sense of each sentence be a rule to guide your voice, whether it must be high or low, swift or leisurely. In the invocation of God, in humble adoration, in confession of sin, and self-resignation, a slower and a modester voice is for the most part very becoming, as well as in every other part of prayer where there is nothing very pathetical expressed. But in petitions, in pleadings, in thanksgivings and rejoicing in God, fervency and importunity, holy joy and triumph, will raise the voice some degrees higher; and lively passions of the delightful kind will naturally draw out our language with greater speed and spirit.

IV. Let proper accents be put according as the sense requires. It would be endless to give particular rules how to place our accents. Nature dictates this to every man, if he will but attend to the dictates of nature. Yet in order to attain it in greater perfection, and to secure us from irregularity in this point, let us avoid these few things following:

1. Avoid a constant uniformity of voice, that is, when every word and sentence are spoken without any difference of sound; like a boy at school repeating all his lesson in one dull note, which shews that he is not truly acquainted with the sense and value of the author. Now though persons may be truly sincere and devout who speak without any difference of accent, yet such a pronunciation will appear to others as careless and negligent, as though the person that speaks were unconcerned about the great work in which he is engaged, and as though he had none of his affections moved, whereby his voice might be modulated into agreeable changes.

2. Avoid a vicious disposition of the accents and false pronunciation. As for instance, it is a vicious pronunciation, when a person uses just the same set of accents, and repeats the same set of sounds and cadences in every sentence, though his sentences are ever so different as to their sense, as to the length, or as to the warmth of expression: As if a man should begin every sentence in prayer with a high voice, and end it in a low; or begin each line with a hoarse and deep bass, and end it with a shrill and sharp sound. This is as if a musician should have but one sort of tune, or one single set of notes, and repeat it over again in every line of a song, which could never be graceful. Another instance of false pronunciation is, when strong accents are put upon little words, and particles which bear no great force in the sentence. And some persons are so unhappy, that those little words, they, and that, and of, and by, shall have the biggest force of the

voice bestowed upon them; whilst the phrases and expressions of chief signification are spoken with a cold and low voice. Another instance of false pronunciation is, when a calm plain sentence, wherein there is nothing pathetic, is delivered with much force and violence of speech: or when the most pathetical and affectionate expressions are spoken with the utmost calmness and composure of voice. All which are very unnatural in themselves, and to be avoided by those that would speak properly, to the edification of such as worship with them. The last instance I shall mention of false pronunciation is, when we fall into a musical turn of voice, as though we were singing instead of praying. Some devout souls have been betrayed into such a self-pleasing tone, by the warmth of their spirits in secret worship; and having none to hear, and inform them how disagreeable it is to others, have indulged it even to an incurable habit.

3. Avoid a fond and excessive humouring every word and sentence to extremes, as if you were upon a stage in a theatre; which fault also some serious persons have fallen into for want of caution. And it hath appeared so like affectation, that it hath given great ground for censure. As for instance, if we should express every humble and mournful sentence in a weeping tone, and with our voice personate a person that is actually crying; that is what our adversaries have exposed by the name of canting and whining, and have thrown it upon a whole party, for the sake of the imprudence of a few. Another instance of this excessive affectation is, when we express every pleasurable sentence in our prayers, every promise or comfort, every joy or hope, in too free and airy a manner, with too bold an exultation, or with a broad smile, which indeed looks like too familiar a dealing with the great God. Every odd and unpleasing tone should be banished from divine worship; nor should we appear before God in humility upon our knees, with grandeur and magnificence upon our tongues, lest the sound of our voice should contradict our gesture, lest it should savour of irreverence in so awful a presence, and give disgust to those that hear us.

SECTION VII.

OF GESTURE IN PRAYER.

V. We proceed now to the fifth and last thing considerable in the gift of prayer; and that is, gesture. And though it may not so properly be termed a part of the gift, yet in as much as it belongs to the outward performance of this piece of worship, I cannot think it improper to treat a little of it in this place. Since we are commanded to pray always, and at all seasons, there can be no posture of the body unfit for short ejaculations, and pious breathings towards God; while we lie in our beds, while we sit at our tables, or are taking our rest in any methods of refreshment, our souls may go out towards our heavenly Father, and have sweet converse with him in short prayers. And to this we must refer that passage; 1 *Chron.* xvii. 16. concerning David, where it is said, *He sat before the Lord, and said, Lord, who am I, or what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* But when we draw near to God in special seasons of worship, the work of prayer calls for a greater solemnity, and in every thing that relates to it, we ought to compose ourselves with greater reverence; that we may *warship God with our bodies, as well as with our spirits*, and pay him devotion with our whole natures; 1 *Cor.* vi. 20. In our discourse concerning gestures fit for worship, we shall consider, first, the posture of

the whole body; and secondly, of the particular parts of it; and endeavour to secure you against indecencies in either of them.

1. Those postures of the body which the light of nature and rule of scripture seem to dictate as most proper for prayer, are standing, kneeling, or prostration.

Prostration is sometimes used in secret prayer, when a person is under a deep and uncommon sense of sin, and falls flat upon his face before God, and pours out his soul before him, under the influence of such thoughts, and the working of such graces, as produce very uncommon expressions of humiliation and self-abasement. This we find in scripture made use of upon many occasions; as *Abraham fell on his face before God;* Gen. xvii. 3. and *Joshua before the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of the host of God;* Josh. v. 14. So Moses, Ezekiel, and Daniel, at other seasons: So in the New Testament, when *John fell at the feet of the angel to worship him,* supposing it had been our Lord; *Rev.* xix. 10. And who could choose but fall down to the dust at the presence of God himself.

Kneeling is the most frequent posture used in this worship, and nature seems to dictate and lead us to it as an expression of humility, of a sense of our wants, a supplication for mercy, and adoration of, and dependence upon him before whom we kneel. This posture hath been practised in all ages and in all nations, even where the light of scripture never shined; and if it might be had with conveniency, would certainly be a most agreeable posture for the worship of God, in public assemblies, as well as in private families, or in our secret chambers. There are so many instances and directions for this posture in scripture, that it would be useless to take pains to prove it. So Solomon; 2 *Chron.* vi. 13. Ezra; *Ezra* ix. 5. Daniel; *Daniel* vi. 10. Christ himself; *Luke* xxii. 41. Paul; *Acts* xx. 36. and xxi. 5. *Eph.* iii. 14.

In the last place, standing is a posture not unfit for this worship, especially in places where we have not conveniency for the humbler gestures. For as standing up before a person whom we respect and reverence, is a token of that esteem and honour which we pay him; so standing before God, where we have not conveniences of kneeling, is an agreeable testification of our high esteem of him whom we then address and worship. There are instances of this gesture in the word of God. Mark xi. 25. *Our Saviour says to his disciples, when ye stand praying:* and Luke xviii. 13. *The publican stood afar off, and prayed.* Standing seems to have been the common gesture of worship in a large and public assembly; 2 *Chron.* xx. 4, 5, 13. And in this case it is very proper to conform to the usage of christians with whom we worship, whether standing or kneeling, since neither of them are made absolutely necessary by the word of God.

But I cannot think that sitting, or other postures of rest and laziness, ought to be indulged in solemn seasons of prayer, unless persons are in any respect infirm or aged, or the work of prayer be drawn out so long as to make it troublesome to human nature to maintain itself always in one posture. And in these cases, whatsoever gesture of body keeps the mind in the best composure, and fits it most to proceed in this worship, will not only be accepted of God, but is most agreeable to him. For it is a great rule that he hath given, and he will always stand by, that *bodily exercise profiteth little;* for he looks chiefly after the heart, *and he will have mercy and not sacrifice.*

2. The posture of the several parts of the body, that are most agreeable to worship, and that may secure us from all indecencies, may be thus particularized and enumerated.

As for the head, let it be kept for the most part without motion; for there are very few turns of the head in the worship of prayer that can be accounted decent. And many persons have exposed themselves to ridicule, by tossings and shakings of the head, and nodding while they have been offering the solemn sacrifice of prayer to God. Though it must be allowed that in cases of great humiliation, the hanging down of the head is no improper method to express that temper of mind. So the praying publican in the text aforecited: So the Jews in the time of Ezra, in a full congregation *bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord, with their faces toward the ground;* Neh. viii. 6. But in our expressions of hope and joy, it is natural *to lift up the head, while we believe that our redemption draws nigh;* as in *Luke* xxi. 28. I might also mention the apostle's advice, that *he that prays ought to have his head uncovered, lest he dishonour his head;* 1 Cor. xi. 4.

In the face, the God of nature hath written various indications of the temper of the mind; and especially when it is moved by any warm affection. In divine worship, the whole visage should be composed to gravity and solemnity, to express a holy awe and reverence of the majesty of God, and the high importance of the work wherein we are engaged. In confession of sin, while we express the sorrows of our souls, melancholy will appear in our countenances; the dejection of the mind may be read there, and according to the language of scripture, *shame and confusion will cover our faces.* The humble sinner blushes before God at the remembrance of his guilt; *Jer.* li. 51. *Ezra* ix. 6. Fervency of spirit in our petitions, and holy joy when we give thanks to our God for his mercies, and rejoice in our highest hope, will be discovered by very agreeable and pleasing traces in the features and countenance.

But here let us take heed that we do not expose ourselves to the censure of our Saviour, who reproved *the pharisees for disfiguring their faces all that day which they set apart for secret fasting and prayer;* Matt. vi. 16. While we are engaged in the very duty, some decent appearances of the devotion of the mind in the countenance, are very natural and proper, and are not here forbidden by our Lord; but at the same time it is best that those discoveries or characters of the countenance should fall below, and stay behind the inward affections of the mind, rather than rise too high, or than go before. The devotion of our hearts should be warmer and stronger than that of our faces: And we should have a care of all irregular and disagreeable distortions of the face; all those affected grimaces, and wringing of the countenance, as it were to squeeze out our words or our tears, which sometimes may tempt our fellow-worshippers to disgust when they behold us; as well as on the other hand avoid yawning, and an air of listlessness and drowsy gestures, which discover the sloth of the mind. It is a terrible word spoken by Jeremy in another case, Jer. xlviii. 10. *Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently.*

To *lift up the eyes to heaven* is a very natural posture of prayer, and therefore the Psalmist so often mentions it, *Psalm* cxxi. 1. and cxxiii. 1. and cxli. 8. Though sometimes under great dejection of spirit and concern for sin, it is very decent with the publican to look down, as it were upon the ground, as being unworthy to lift up our eyes to heaven where God dwells; *Luke* xviii. 13. But above all, a roving eye, that takes notice of every thing, ought to be avoided in prayer; for though it may be possible for a person that prays to keep his thoughts composed whilst his eyes thus wander, (which at the same time seems very difficult) yet spectators will be ready to judge that our *hearts are given to wander* as much as our eyes are, and they will suspect that the life and

spirit of devotion is absent. Upon this account, some persons have found it most agreeable to keep the eyes always closed in prayer, lest by the objects that occur to their sight, the chain of their thoughts should be broken, or their hearts led away from God by their senses: Nor can I think it improper to shut that door of the senses, and exclude the world while we are conversing with God. But in this and other directions I would always excuse such persons who lie under any natural weaknesses, and must use those methods that make the work of prayer most easy to them.

The *lifting up of the hands*, sometimes folded together, or sometimes apart, is a very natural expression of our seeking help from God, who dwells above; *Psalm* xxviii. 2. and cxxxiv. 2. The elevation of the eyes and the hands is so much the dictate of nature in all acts of worship wherein we address God, that the heathens themselves frequently practised it, as we have an account in their several writers, as well as we find it mentioned as the practice of the saints in the holy scripture. And as the elevation of the hands to heaven is a very natural gesture when a person prays for himself; so when a superior prays for a blessing to descend upon a person of an inferior character, it is very natural to lay his hand upon the head of the person for whom he prays. This we find practised from the beginning of the world, and the practice descends throughout all ages. It is true indeed, this gesture, *the imposition of hands*, was used by the prophets and apostles, when they pronounced authoritative and divine blessings upon men, and communicated miraculous gifts. But I esteem it not so much a peculiar rite belonging to the prophetical benediction, as it is a natural expression of a desire of the divine blessing from a father to a son, from an elder person to one that is younger, from a minister to other christians, especially those that are *babes in Christ;* and therefore when a person is set apart and devoted to God in any solemn office, whilst prayers are made for a divine blessing to descend upon him, imposition of hands seems to be a gesture of nature; and considered in itself, I cannot think it either unlawful or necessary.

With regard to other parts of the body, there is little need of any directions. Calmness and quietness, and a uniformity of posture, seem to be more decent. Almost all motions are disagreeable, especially such as carry with them any sound or noise; for hereby the worship is rather disturbed than promoted, and some persons by such actions have seemed as though they beat time to the music of their own sentences. In secret devotion indeed, sighs, and groans, and weeping may be very well allowed, where we give vent to our warmest passions, and our whole nature and frame is moved with devout affections of the mind. But in public these things should be less indulged, unless in such extraordinary seasons, when all the assembly may be effectually convinced they arise deep from the heart. If we indulge ourselves in various motions or noise made by the hands or feet, or any other parts, it will tempt others to think that our minds are not very intensely engaged, or at least it will appear so familiar and irreverent, as we would not willingly be guilty of in the presence of our superiors here on earth.

Of family prayer.—Since it is so necessary for the person that speaks in prayer to abstain from noisy motions, I hope all that join with him will understand that it is very unseemly for them to disturb the worship with motion and noise. How indecent is it at family prayer for persons to spend a good part of the time in settling themselves upon their knees, adjusting their dress, moving their chairs, saluting those that pass by and come in after the worship is begun? How unbecoming is it to stir and rise,

while the two or three last sentences are spoken, as though devotion were so unpleasant and tedious a thing, that they longed to have it over? How often is it found that the knee is the only part that pays external reverence to God, while all the other parts of the body are composed to laziness, ease, and negligence? Some there are that seldom come in till the prayer is begun, and then there is a bustle and disturbance made for their accommodation. To prevent some of these irregularities, I would persuade him that prays, not to begin till all that design to join in the family worship are present, and that even before the chapter is read; for I would not have the word of God used in a family for no other purpose than the tolling of a bell at church, to tell that the people are coming in to prayers.

Of grace before and after meat.—Since I have spoken so particularly about family-prayer, I would insert a word or two concerning another part of social worship in a family, and that is, giving thanks before and after meat. Herein we ought to have a due regard to the occasion, and the persons present; the neglect of which hath been attended with indecencies and indiscretions.—Some have used themselves to mutter a few words with so low a voice, as though by some secret charm they were to consecrate the food alone, and there was no need of the rest to join with them in the petitions. Others have broke out into so violent a sound, as though they were bound to make a thousand people hear them.—Some perform this part of worship with so slight and familiar an air, as though they had no sense of the great God to whom they speak: Others have put on an unnatural solemnity, and changed their natural voice into so different and aukward a tone, not without some distortions of countenance, that have tempted strangers to ridicule.

It is the custom of some, to hurry over a single sentence or two, and they have done, before half the company are prepared to lift up a thought to heaven. And some have been just heard to bespeak a blessing on the church and the king, but seem to have forgot they were asking God to bless their food, or giving thanks to the food they have received. Others again have given themselves a loose into a long prayer, and among a multitude of other petitions, have not had one that related to the table before them.

The general rules of prudence, together with a due observation of the custom of the place where we live, would correct all these disorders, and teach us that a few sentences suited to the occasion, spoken with an audible and proper voice, are sufficient for this purpose, especially if any strangers are present. If we are abroad in mixed company, many times it is best for each person to lift up a petition to God in secret for himself; yet in a religious family, or where all the company are of a piece, and no other circumstance forbids it, I cannot disapprove of a pious soul sometimes breathing out a few more devout expressions than are just necessary to give thanks for the food we receive; nor is it improper to join any other present occurrence of providence, together with the table worship. Here I would also beg leave to add this, that when a person is eating alone, I do not see any necessity of rising always from his seat, to recommend his food to the blessing of God, which may be done in any posture of body with a short ejaculation: Yet when he eats in company, I am of opinion that the present custom of standing up is more decent and honourable than of sitting down, just before we give thanks, which was too much practised in the former age.

Thus I have delivered my sentiments concerning the gestures proper for prayer. And I hope they will appear useful and proper to maintain the dignity of the worship, and to

pay honour to God with our bodies, as well as our souls. As we must not make ourselves mere statues and lifeless engines of prayer, so neither must we, out of pretence of spirituality, neglect all decencies. Our forms of religion are not numerous nor gaudy as the jewish rites, nor theatrical gestures, or superstitious fopperies, like the papists; we have no need to be masters of ceremonies, in order to worship God aright, if we will but attend to the simplicity of manners which nature dictates, and the precepts and examples of the gospel confirm.

Remark. Though the gestures that belong to preaching are very different from those of prayer, yet most of the rules that are prescribed for the expression, and the voice in prayer, may be usefully applied also to preaching; but this difference is to be observed, that in the work of preaching, the same restraints are not always necessary, and especially in applying truth warmly to the conscience; for then we speak to men in the name and authority of God, and we may indulge a greater freedom and brightness of language, more lively motions, and bolder efforts of zeal and outward fervour; but in prayer, where, in the name of sinful creatures, we address the great and holy God, every thing that belongs to us must be composed to an appearance of humility.

SECTION VIII.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS ABOUT THE GIFT OF PRAYER.

Thus have I finished what I designed upon the gift of prayer, with regard to the matter, the method, the expression, the voice, and the gesture. I shall conclude this chapter with these five general directions:

I. Keep the middle way between a nice and laborious attendance to all the rules I have given, and a careless neglect of them. As every rule seems to carry its own reason with it, so it is proper that there should be some regard had to it, when occasions for the practice occur. For I have endeavoured to say nothing on this subject, but what might some way or other be useful towards the attainment of an agreeable gift of prayer, and the decent exercise of that gift. The multiplicity of our wants, the unfaithfulness of our memories, the dulness and slowness of our apprehensions, the common wanderings of our thoughts, and the coldness of our affections, will require our best care for the remedy of them.

Yet, on the other hand, I would not have you confine yourselves too precisely to all these forms in matter, method, expression, voice, and gesture, upon every occasion, lest you feel yourselves thereby under some restraint, and prevent your souls of that divine liberty, with which upon special occasions the Spirit of God blesses his own people in the performance of this duty. *When the heart is full of good matter, the tongue will sometimes be as the pen of a ready writer;* Psalm lxv. 1. Such a fixedness and fulness of thought, such a fervour of pious affections, will sometimes produce so glorious a fluency and variety of pertinent and moving expressions, and all in so just a method, as makes it appear the man is carried beyond himself, and would be straitened and cramped by a careful attendance to rules. See then that the graces of prayer are at work in your souls with power; let this be your first and highest care; and by a sweet influence this will lead you to a natural and easy performance of this duty, according to most of the particular rules I have given, even without a nice and exact

attendance to them. So without attendance to the rules of art, a man may sometimes, in a very musical humour, strike out some inimitable graces and flourishes, and charm all that hear him.

II. Among ministers, and among your fellow-christians, observe those that have the most edifying gifts, and with regard to the matter, method, expression, voice, and gesture, endeavour to imitate them who are more universally approved of, and the exercise of whose talents are most abundantly blessed, to excite and maintain the devotion of all their fellow-worshippers. And at the same time also take notice of all the irregularities and indecencies that any persons are guilty of in this worship, in order to avoid them when you pray.

III. Use all proper means to obtain a manly presence of mind, and holy courage, in religious performances. Though excess of bashfulness be a natural infirmity, yet if indulged in such affairs, it may become very culpable. There have been many useful gifts buried in silence, through a sinful bashfulness in the person endowed with them: And generally all persons, when they first begin to pray in public, feel something of this weakness, for want of a due presence of mind; and it hath had different effects. Some persons have lost that due calmness and temper which should govern their expressions; and have been driven on to the end of their prayer, like a school-boy hurrying his lesson over, or a larum set a running, that could not stop till it was quite down. Others have hesitated at every sentence, and, it may be, felt a stop in their speech, that they could utter no more. Others again, whose minds have been well furnished and prepared, have lost their own scheme of thoughts, and made poor work at first, through mere bashfulness.

I grant, that courage and a degree of assurance is a natural talent; but it may also, in a great measure, be acquired by the use of proper means. I will here mention a few of them: 1. Get above the shame of appearing religious, that you may be dead to the reproaches of a wicked world, and despise the jests and scandal that are cast upon strict godliness. 2. Make religious conversation your practice and delight. If you are but inured to speak to men concerning the things of God without blushing, you will be enabled to speak to God in the presence of men with holy confidence. 3. Labour to attain this gift of prayer in a tolerable degree, and exercise it often in secret for some considerable time before you begin in public. 4. Take heed that your heart be always well prepared, and let the matter of your prayer be well premeditated when you make your first public attempts of it. 5. Strive to maintain upon your soul a much greater awe of the majesty of that God to whom you speak, than of the opinions of those fellow-creatures with whom you worship; that so you may, as it were, forget you are in the company of men, while you address the Most High God. Chide your heart into courage, when you find it shy and sinking, and say, *Dare I speak to the great and dreadful God, and shall I be afraid of man?*

Now in order to practise this advice well, the next shall be akin to it. 6. Be not too tender of your own reputation in these externals of religion. This softness of spirit, which we call bashfulness, has often a great deal of fondness for self mingled with it. When we are to speak in public, this enfeebles the mind, throws us into a hurry, and makes us perform much worse than we do in secret. When we are satisfied, therefore, that we are engaged in present duty to God, let us maintain a noble negligence of the censures of men, and speak with the same courage as though none but God were present.

Yet to administer further relief under this weakness, I add, 7. Make your first essays in the company of one or two either your inferiors, or your most intimate, most pious and candid acquaintance, that you may be under no fear nor concern about their sentiments of your performance. Or join yourself in society with some young christians of equal standing, and set apart times for praying together, which is an excellent way to obtain the gift of prayer. 8. Do not aim at length of prayer in your younger attempts, but rather be short; offer up a few more common and necessary requests at first, and proceed by degrees to enlarge and fulfil the several parts of this worship, as further occasion shall offer, and as your gifts and courage increase. 9. Be not discouraged if your first experiments be not so successful as you desire. Many a christian has in time arrived at a glorious gift in prayer, who in their younger essays have been overwhelmed with bashfulness and confusion. Let not Satan prevail with you, therefore, to cast off this practice, and your hope, at once, by such a temptation as this. 10. Make it the matter of your earnest requests to God, that you may be endowed with christian courage, with a holy liberty of speech, and freedom of utterance, which the blessed apostle Paul often prays for: And you have reason to hope, that he that gives *every good and perfect gift*, will not deny you that which is so necessary to the performance of your duty. I proceed now to the fourth general direction:

IV. Intreat the assistance of some kind christian friend, to give you notice of all the irregularities that yourselves may have been guilty of in prayers, especially in your first years of the practice of this duty; and esteem those the most valuable of your friends, who will put themselves to the trouble of giving you a modest and an obliging hint of any of your own imperfections: For it is not possible that we ourselves should judge of the tone of our own voice, or the gestures that we ourselves use, whether they be agreeable to our fellow-worshippers or no. And in other instances also, our friends may form a more unbiassed judgment than ourselves, and therefore are fittest to be our correctors. For want of this, some persons, in their youth, have gained so ill a habit of speaking in public, and so many disorders have attended their exercise of the gift of prayer, ill tones, vicious accents, wild distortions of the countenance, and divers other improprieties, which they carried with them all the years of their life, and have oftentimes exposed the worship of God to contempt, and hindered the edification of those that join with them, rather than promoted it.

V. Be frequent in the practice of this duty of prayer, not only in secret, but with one another. For though every rule that I have before given, were fixed in your memories, and always at hand, yet without frequent practice, you will never attain to any great skill and readiness in this holy exercise. As our graces themselves, by being often tried and put upon action, become stronger, and shine brighter, give God more glory, and do more service to men; so will it fare with every gift of the Holy Spirit also; it is improved by frequent exercise. Therefore the apostle bids the young evangelist Timothy, that he should not neglect *to stir up the gift that was in him*, though it was a gift communicated in an extraordinary way, *by the imposition of hands;* 2 Tim. i. 6. And therefore it is that some serious christians that have less knowledge, will excel persons of great learning, and wit, and judgment, in the gift of prayer; because though they do not understand the rules so well, yet they practise abundantly more. And for the most part, if all other circumstances are equal, it will be found a general truth, that he that prays most, prays best.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GRACE OF PRAYER.

IN the two first chapters, I have finished what I proposed concerning the external parts of prayer; I proceed now to take a short view of the internal and spiritual part of that duty: and this has been usually called the grace of prayer. Here I should endeavour to explain what it means, and shew how properly the term is used: Afterward I shall particularly mention what are those inward and spiritual exercises of the mind, which are required in the duty of prayer, and then give directions how to attain them. But in the most part of this chapter I shall pass over things with much brevity, because it is not my design, in writing this book, to say over again what so many practical writers have said on these subjects.

SECTION I.

WHAT THE GRACE OF PRAYER IS, AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM THE GIFT.

GRACE, in its most general sense, implies the free and undeserved favour of one person toward another that is esteemed his inferior: And in the language of the New Testament, it is usually put to signify the favour and mercy of God toward sinful creatures, which upon all accounts is acknowledged to be free and undeserved. Now because our natures are corrupt and averse to what is good, and whensoever they are changed and inclined to God and divine things, this is done by the power of God working in us; therefore this very change of nature, this renewed and divine frame of mind, is called in the common language of christians by the name of *grace*.

If I were to write my thoughts of the distinction between the terms of virtue, holiness, and grace, I should give them thus: *Virtue* generally signifies the mere material part of that which is good, without a particular reference to God, as the principle or end thereof: Therefore the good dispositions and actions of the heathens were called virtues. And this word also is applied to *sobriety*, *righteousness*, *charity*, and every thing that relates to ourselves and our neighbours, rather than to religion and things that relate to divine worship. *Holiness* signifies all those good dispositions and actions, with their particular reference to God as their end, to whose glory they are devoted and performed. The word holy signifies that which is devoted, or dedicated. *Grace* denotes the same dispositions, with a peculiar regard to God, as their principle, intimating that they proceed from his favour.

Sometimes this word is used in a comprehensive sense, to signify the whole train of christian virtues, or the universal habit of holiness. So may those texts be understood; John i. 16. *Of his fulness we have received grace.* 2 Pet. iii. 18. *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And so in our common language we say, such a person is a graceless wretch, he has no grace at all, that is, no good dispositions. We say such a one is truly gracious, or he has a principle of grace, that is, he is a man of religion and virtue. Sometimes it is used in its singular sense, and means any one inclination or holy principle in the mind. So we say, the grace of faith, the grace of

repentance, the grace of hope, or love. So 2 Cor. viii. 7. *Therefore as ye abound in faith, in knowledge—in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also,* that is, liberality. Sometimes it is used in a sense a little more enlarged, but not universal, and it implies all those pious qualifications that belong to any one action or duty; so we read of the grace that belongs to conversation; Col. iv. 6. *Let your speech be always with grace.* The grace of singing; Col. iii. 16. *Singing with grace in your hearts.* And the grace of divine worship seems to be mentioned; Heb. xii. 28. *Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, &c.* And the grace of prayer; Zech. xii. 10. *I will pour on the house of David the Spirit of grace and supplications.*

The *grace* of prayer, in our common acceptation, is not any one single act or habit of the mind, but it implies all those holy dispositions of soul, which are to be exercised in that part of divine worship. It consists in a readiness to put forth those several acts of the sanctified mind, will and affections, which are suited to the duty of prayer. Hence will appear the great difference that is between the *gift* and *grace* of prayer. The gift is but the outside, the shape, the carcase of the duty. The grace is the soul and spirit, that gives it life, and vigour, and efficacy, that renders it acceptable to God, and of real advantage to ourselves. The *gift* chiefly consists in a readiness of thought, agreeable to the several parts of prayer, and a facility of expressing those thoughts in speaking to God. The grace consists merely in the inward workings of the heart and conscience toward God and religion. The gift has a shew and appearance of holy desires and affections; but holy affections, sincere desires, and real converse with God, belong only to the grace of prayer. The *gift* and the *grace* are many times separated one from the other; and it hath been often found that the gift of prayer hath been attained in a great degree by study and practice, and by the common workings of the Spirit of God communicated to some persons that have known nothing of true grace. There may be also the grace of prayer in lively exercise in some souls, who have but a very small degree of this gift, and that hardly know how to form their thoughts and desires into a regular method, or to express those desires in tolerable language.

Concerning some persons it may be said, as in *Matt.* vii. 22. that though they could pour out abundance of words before God in prayer, though they could preach like apostles, or like angels, or *cast out devils in the name of Christ, yet our Lord Jesus knows them not,* for they have no grace. On the other hand, there are some that are dear to God, that can but *chatter and cry like a swallow or a crane,* as Hezekiah did, and yet are in the lively exercise of the grace of prayer. But where both these, the gift and the grace, meet together in one person, such a christian brings honour to God, and has a greater capacity and prospect of doing much service for souls in the world; he is made of great use to the edification and comfort of his fellow-christians. Those acts of the sanctified soul in all its powers, which are put forth in the duty of prayer, may be properly called so many graces of the Holy Spirit drawn forth into exercise. And of these some belong to the whole work and worship of prayer, and others are peculiar to the several parts of the duty.

SECTION II.

GENERAL GRACES OF PRAYER.

THE graces that belong to the whole work or duty of prayer, are such as these:

I. Faith or belief of the being of God, and his perfect knowledge, and his gracious notice of all that we speak in prayer. This rule the apostle gives, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all that diligently seek him.* We should endeavour to impress our minds frequently with a fresh and lively belief of God's existence, though he be so much unknown; of his presence, though he be invsible; of his just and merciful regard to all the actions of men, and especially their religious affairs; that so prayer may not be a matter of custom and ceremony, but performed with a design and hope of pleasing God, and getting some good from him. This exercise of a lively faith runs through every part of the duty, and gives spirit and power to the whole worship.

II. Gravity, solemnity, and seriousness of spirit. Let a light and trivial temper be utterly banished, when we come into the presence of God. When we speak to the great Creator, who must also be our judge, about the concerns of infinite and everlasting moment, we ought to have our souls clothed with solemnity, and not to assume those airs which are lawful at other seasons, when we talk with our fellow-creatures about meaner affairs. A wantonness and vanity of mind ought never to be indulged in the least degree, when we come to perform any part of divine worship; and especially when we, *who are but dust and ashes*, speak unto the great and dreadful God.

III. Spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, should run through the whole of this duty. For prayer is a retirement from earth, and a retreat from our fellow-creatures to attend on God, and hold correspondence with him that dwells in heaven. If our thoughts are full of *corn and wine and oil*, and the business of this life, we shall not seek so earnestly the favour and face of God, as becomes devout worshippers. The things of the world therefore must be commanded to stand by for a season, and to abide at the foot of the mount, while we walk up higher to offer up our sacrifices, as Abraham did; and to meet our God. Our aims, and ends, and desires, should grow more spiritual, as we proceed in this duty. And though God indulges us to converse with him about many of our temporal affairs in prayer, yet let us take care that the things of our souls, and the eternal world, always possess the chief room in our hearts. And whatsoever of the cares of this life enter into our prayers, and are spread before the Lord, let us see that our aims therein are spiritual, that our very desires of earthly comforts may be purified from all carnal ends, and sanctified to some divine purposes, to the glory of God, to the honour of the gospel, and the salvation of souls.

IV. Sincerity and uprightness of heart is another grace that must run through this worship. Whether we speak to God concerning his own glories, whether we give him thanks for his abundant goodness, or confess our various iniquities before him, or express our desires of mercy at his hand, still let our hearts and our lips agree, and not be found mockers of God, *who searches the heart, and tries the reins*, and can spy hypocrisy in the darkest corners of the soul.

V. Holy watchfulness, and intention of mind upon the duty in which we are engaged; this must run through every part of prayer. Our thoughts must not be suffered to wander among the creatures, and rove *to the ends of the earth*, when we come to converse with the high and holy God. Without this holy watchfulness we shall be in danger of leaving God in the midst of the worship, because the temptations that arise from Satan, and from our own hearts, are various and strong. Without this watchfulness our worship will degenerate into formality, and we shall find coldness and indifferency creeping upon our spirits, and spoiling the success of our duties. *Watch unto prayer* is a constant direction of the great apostle. I might add to these, humility, and delight, or pleasure, and other exercises of the sanctified affections; but I shall have occasion more properly to mention them under the next head.

SECTION III.

GRACES THAT BELONG TO PARTICULAR PARTS OF PRAYER.

The graces that peculiarly belong to the several parts of prayer, are distinguished according to the parts of this duty; *viz.*

I. Invocation or calling upon God, requires a special awe of his majesty to attend it, and a deep sense of our own meanness and unworthiness; and at the same time we should express holy wonder and pleasure, that *the most high God who inhabits eternity*, will suffer such contemptible and worthless beings as we are to hold correspondence with him.

II. The work of adoration or praise, runs through the several attributes of the divine nature, and requires of us the exercise of our various affections suited to those several attributes. As when we mention God's self-sufficiency and independency, it becomes us to be humble and acknowledge our dependence: When we speak of his power, and of his wisdom, we should abase ourselves before him, because of our weakness and folly, as well as stand in holy admiration at the infinity of those glories of God. When we mention his love and compassion, our souls should return much love to him again, and have our affections going forth strongly towards him. When we think of his justice, we should have a holy awe upon our spirits, and a religious fear, suited to the presence of the just and dreadful God. And the thought of his forgiveness should awaken us to hope and joy.

III. In the confession of our sorrows and our sins, humility is a necessary grace, and deep contrition of soul, in the presence of that God whose laws we have broken, whose gospel we have abused, whose majesty we have affronted, and whose vengeance we have deserved. Here all the springs of repentance should be set open, and we should mourn for sin, even at the same time that we hope iniquity is forgiven, and our souls are reconciled to God. Shame and self-indignation, and holy revenge against the corruptions of our hearts, should be awakened also in this part of prayer.

IV. In our petitions we should raise our desires to such different degrees of fervency, as the nature of our requests makes necessary. When we pray for the things of the upper world, and eternal blessings, we cannot be too warm in our desires: When we seek the mercies of life, the degree of fervency should be abated, for it is possible that we may be

happy, and yet go without many of the comforts of the present state: Submission is here required; and God expects to see his children thus rationally religious, and wisely to divide the things that are most agreeable to his will, and most necessary for our felicity. While we make intercession for our friends, or our enemies, we ought to feel in ourselves warm and lively compassion; and when we pray for the church of Christ in the world, we should animate all our expressions with a burning zeal for his glory, and tenderness for our fellow-christians.

V. Pleading with God, calls for humble importunity: For the arguments that we use with God, in pleading with him, are but the various forms of importunate request. But because we are but creatures, and we speak to God, humility ought to mingle with every one of our arguments. Our pleadings with him should be so expressed, as always to carry in them that decency, and that distance, that becomes creatures in the presence of their Maker. In pleading also we are required to exercise faith in the promises of the gospel, faith in the name of Christ Jesus our Mediator, faith in the mercies of our God, according to the discoveries he hath made of himself in his word. We are called to believe that he is a God hearing prayer, and will bestow upon us what we seek so far as is necessary for his glory, and our salvation; *to believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;* Heb. xi. 6. Here also the grace of hope comes into exercise; for while we trust the promises, we hope for the things promised, or the things for which we petition. We ought to maintain an humble holy expectation of those mercies for which we plead with God. We must *direct our prayer to him, and look up* with David; *Psalm* v. 3. and with Habakkuk, *stand upon our watch-tower, and see what he will answer us;* Habak. ii. 1.

VI. In that part of prayer which is called profession, or self-resignation, great humility is again required; a sweet submission to his will, a composedness and quietness of spirit under his determinations, even though, for reasons of infinite wisdom and love, he withhold from us the particular comforts that we seek. Here *let patience have its perfect exercise*, and let the soul continue in an humble frame, waiting upon God. While we give up ourselves to God, a divine steadiness of soul should attend it, and the firmest courage of heart against all oppositions, while we confirm all our self-dedications to the Lord.

VII. In thanksgiving, a most hearty gratitude of soul is required, a deep sense of divine favours, and a readiness to return unto God according to his goodness, to the uttermost of our capacities; a growing love to God, and sincere longing to do something for him, answerable to the variety and riches of his grace towards us. Here also, with holy wonder, we acknowledge the condescension of God to bestow mercies upon us so unworthy; and this wonder should arise and grow up into divine joy, while we bless our Maker for the mercies of this life, and our Father for an interest in his covenant and his special love. And in our thanksgivings we should be sure to take notice of all returns of prayer, all merciful appearances of God in answer to our requests; for it is but a poor converse maintained with God, if we are only careful about our speaking to him, but take no notice of any replies he condescends to make to our poor and worthless addresses.

VIII. When we bless God, we should shew an earnest longing after the honour of the name of God, and our souls should breathe fervently after the accomplishment of those promises wherein he hath engaged to spread his own honours, and to magnify

his own name, and the name of his Son; we should, as it were, exult and triumph in those glories, which God, our God possesses, and rejoice to think that he shall for ever possess them. Then we conclude the whole prayer with our Amen of sincerity and faith, in one short word expressing over again our adorations, our confessions, and our petitions; trusting and hoping for the audience of our prayers, and acceptance of our persons, from whence we should take encouragement to rise from this duty with a sweet serenity and composure of mind, and maintain a joyful and heavenly frame, as those that have been with God.

But lest some pious and humble souls should be discouraged, when they find not these lively exercises of faith, hope, love, fervency of desire, and divine delight in worship, and thence conclude that they have not the grace of prayer; I would add this caution, *viz.* That all the graces of prayer are seldom at work in the soul at once, in an eminent and sensible degree; sometimes one prevails more, and sometimes another, in this feeble and imperfect state: And when a christian comes before God with much deadness of heart, much overcome with carnal thoughts, and feels great reluctancy even to the duty of prayer, and falls down before God, mourning, complaining, self-condemning, and with sighs and deep groans in secret, makes known his burden, and his sins to God: though he can speak but few words before him, such a frame and temper of mind will be approved of by that God who judges the secrets of the heart, and makes most compassionate allowances for the infirmity of our flesh, and will acknowledge his own grace working in that soul, though it be but just breathing and struggling upward through loads of sin and sorrow.

SECTION IV.

DIRECTIONS TO ATTAIN THE GRACE OF PRAYER.

In order to direct us in the spiritual performance of this duty, we must consider it as a holy converse maintained between earth and heaven, betwixt the great and holy God and mean and sinful creatures. Now the most natural rules that I can think of, to carry on this converse, are such as these:

I. Direction. Possess your hearts with a most affecting sense of the characters of the two parties that are to maintain this correspondence; that is, God and yourselves. This indeed is one direction for the gift of prayer, but it is also most necessary to attain the grace. Let us consider who this glorious Being is, that invites us to this fellowship with himself; how awful in majesty! how terrible in righteousness! how irresistible in power! how unsearchable in wisdom! how all-sufficient in blessedness! how condescending in mercy! Let us again consider, who are we that are invited to this correspondence: How vile in our original! how guilty in our hearts and lives! how needy of every blessing! how utterly incapable to help ourselves! and how miserable for ever, if we are without God! And if we have sincerely obeyed the call of his gospel, and have attained to some comfortable hope of his love; let us consider, how infinite are our obligations to him, and how necessary, and how delightful it is to enjoy his visits here, with whom it will be our happiness to dwell for ever. When we feel our spirits deeply impressed with such thoughts as these are, we are in the best frame, and most likely way to pray with grace in our hearts.

II. When you come before God, remember the nature of this correspondence, it is all spiritual; remember the dignity and privilege, the design and the importance of it. A sense of the high favour, in being admitted to this privilege and honour, will fill your souls with humble wonder, and with heavenly joy, such as becomes the favourites and worshippers of an infinite God. A due attendance to the design and importance of this duty, will fix your thoughts to the most immoveable attention, and strict watchfulness; it will overspread your spirit with seriousness, it will command all your inward powers to devotion, and will raise your desires to holy fervency. You pray to him that hath power to save and to destroy, about your eternal destruction, or eternal salvation, and if eternity, with all its lawful attendants, will not awaken some of the graces of prayer, the soul must be in a very stupid frame.

III. Seek earnestly a state of friendship with him with whom you converse, and labour after a good hope and assurance of that friendship. *We are all by nature enemies to God, and children of his wrath;* Rom. viii. 7. and Eph. ii. 2. If we are not reconciled, we can never hold communion with him. How can we delight in converse with an enemy so almighty? Or pay him due worship, while we believe he hates, and will destroy us? But oh! how unspeakable is the pleasure in holding converse with so infinite, so almighty, and so compassionate a Friend? And how ready will all the powers of nature be to render every honour to him, while we feel and know ourselves to be his favourites, and the children of his grace? While we believe, that all his honours are our glory in the state of friendship, and each of his perfections are the pillars of our hope, and the assurances of our happiness? Now, in order to obtain this friendship, and to promote this divine fellowship, I recommend you to the next direction:

IV. Live much upon, and with, Jesus the Mediator, by whose interest alone you can come near God, and be brought into his company. *Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: and no man comes to the Father, but by him;* John xiv. 6. *Through him Jews and gentiles have access unto the Father;* Eph. ii. 18. Live much upon him therefore by trust and dependence, and live much with him by meditation and love. When a sinner under first conviction sees with horror the dreadful holiness of God, and his own guilt, and desert of damnation, how fearful is he to draw near to God in prayer? And how much discouraged while he abides without hope? But when he first beholds Christ in his mediatorial offices, and his glorious all-sufficiency to save; when he first beholds *this new and living way of access to God, consecrated by the blood of Christ;* how cheerfully doth he come before the throne of God, and pour out his whole soul in prayer? And how lively is his nature in the exercise of every grace suited to his duty? How deep his humility? How fervent his desires? How importunate his pleadings? How warm and hearty are his thanksgivings? And we have need always to maintain upon our spirits a deep sense of the evil of sin, of our desert of death, of the dreadful holiness of God, and impossibility of our converse with him without a Mediator, that so the name of Jesus may be ever precious to us, and that we may never venture into the presence of God in set and solemn prayer, without the eye of our soul to Christ our glorious Introducer.

V. Maintain always a praying frame; a temper of mind ready to converse with God. This will be one way to keep all praying graces ever ready for exercise. Visit him therefore often, and upon all occasions, with whom you would obtain some immediate communion at solemn seasons of devotion, and make the work of prayer your delight,

nor rest satisfied till you find pleasure in it. What advantages and opportunities soever you enjoy for social prayer, do not neglect praying in secret: At least once a day constrain the businesses of life, to give you leave to say something to God alone. When you join with others in prayer, where you are not the speaker, let your heart be kept intent and watchful to the work, that you may pray so much the better, when you are the mouth of others to God. Take frequent occasion, in the midst of your duties in the world, to lift up your heart to God: He is ready to hear a sudden sentence, and will answer the breathings of a holy soul towards himself, in the short intervals or spaces between your daily affairs. Thus you may *pray without ceasing*, as the apostle directs, and your graces may be ever lively. Whereas if you only make your addresses to God in the morning and evening, and forget him all the day, your hearts will grow indifferent in worship, and you will only pay a salutation with your lips and your knees, and fulfil the task with dull formality.

VI. Seek earnestly the assistance of the Holy Spirit. It is he that works every grace in us, and fits us for every duty; it is he that awakens sleeping graces into exercise; it is he that draws the soul near to God, and teaches us this correspondence with heaven. He is *the Spirit of grace and supplication;* but because this is the subject of the following chapter, I shall pursue it no further here.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

ALL the rules and directions that have hitherto been laid down, in order to teach us to pray, will be ineffectual if we have no divine aids; *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think one thought*, and all that is good comes from God. If therefore we would attain the gift or grace of prayer, we must seek both from heaven; and since the mercies of God of this kind, that are bestowed on men, are usually attributed to the Holy Spirit, he may very properly be called *the Spirit of prayer;* and as such, his assistance is to be sought with diligence and importunity. I confess, *the spirit of prayer*, in our language, may sometimes signify a temper of mind well furnished and ready for the work of prayer. So when we say, There was a greater spirit of prayer found in churches in former days than now; we mean, there was a greater degree of the gift and grace of prayer found amongst men; their hearts and their tongues were better furnished and fitted for this duty. But to deny the spirit of prayer in all other senses, and declare there is no need of any influences from the Holy Spirit to assist us to pray, carries in it a high degree of self-sufficiency, and borders upon profaneness. My business therefore in this chapter, shall be to prove, by plain and easy arguments, that the Spirit of God doth assist his people in prayer: Then to shew what his assistances are, and how far they extend, that we may not expect more from him than scripture promises, nor attribute too little to his influences: And after a few cautions laid down, I shall proceed to give some directions how the aids of the Holy Spirit may be obtained.

SECTION I.

PROOFS OF THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN PRAYER.

THE methods of proof which I shall use to evince the influences of the Spirit of God in prayer, are these three: 1. Express texts of scripture. 2. Collateral texts. 3. The experience of christians.

I. The first argument is drawn from such express texts of scripture as these:

1. Text. Zech. xii. 10. *I will pour out on the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a Spirit of grace, and of supplications.* Here the Holy Spirit of God is called a Spirit of supplication, with respect to the special operations and ends for which he is here promised. The plentiful communication of his operations to men, is often expressed by pouring him out upon them; as *Isaiah* xlv. 3. *Prov.* i. 23. *Titus* iii. 6. and many other places. Now that this prophecy refers to the times of the gospel is evident, because the effect of it is a looking to Christ as pierced or crucified. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced.*

Objection. Some will say this promise only refers to the Jews at the time of their conversion.

Answer. Most of these exceeding great and precious promises, that relate to gospel-times, are made expressly to Jacob, and Israel, and Jerusalem, and Sion, in the language of the Old Testament. And how dreadfully should we deprive ourselves, and all the gentile believers, of all these gracious promises at one stroke, by such a confined exposition? Whereas the apostle Paul sometimes takes occasion to quote a promise of the Old Testament made to the Jews, and applies it to the gentiles, as 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18. *I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;* which is written for the Jews, in *Levit.* xxvi. 12. *Come out from among them —touch no unclean thing—and I will be a father to you, &c.* which are cited from Isaiah lii. 11. and Jer. xxxi. 1, 9. where Israel alone is mentioned. And yet in 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. the apostle says, *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves, &c.* And thus he makes the Corinthians as it were possessors of these very promises. He gives us also much encouragement to do the same, when he tells us; Rom. xv. 4. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope:* and verse 8, 9. he assures us, that *Jesus Christ confirms the promises made to the fathers, that the gentiles may glorify God for his mercy.* Again, in 2 Cor. i. 20. *All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God.* Now it would have been to very little purpose to have told the Romans or the Corinthians of the stability of all the promises of God, if their faith might not have embraced them.

We are said to be blessed with faithful Abraham, if we are imitators of his faith; Gal. iii. 29. *If we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise;* heirs by faith of the same blessings that are promised to Abraham, and to his seed; *Rom.* iv. 13. Now this very promise, the promise of the Spirit, is received by us gentiles, as heirs of Abraham; *Gal.* iii. 14. *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through*

faith. Being interested therefore in his covenant, we have a right to the same promises, so far as they contain grace in them, that may be properly communicated to us. And therefore *the house of David*, in this prophecy of Zechariah, doth not only signify the natural descendants of David the king, but very properly includes the family of Christ, the true David: Believers that are his children, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and members of the true church, whether they were originally Jews or gentiles: *For in Christ Jesus* men are not known by these distinctions, *there is neither Jew nor Greek;* Gal. iii. 28.

2. Text. *Luke* xi. 13. After Christ had answered the request of his disciples, and taught them how to pray, by giving them a pattern of prayer, he recommends them *to ask his Father for the Holy Spirit*, in order to a fuller and further assistance and instruction in this work of prayer, as the whole context seems to intimate.

3. Text. Rom. viii. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* This cannot be interpreted as though the Holy Spirit assumed the work of Christ, who is our proper intercessor and advocate; for the Spirit not being clothed with human nature, cannot properly be represented under such an inferior character, as the nature of prayer or petition seems to imply; whereas our Lord Jesus Christ, being man as well as God, may properly assume the character of a petitioner. The business of the Holy Spirit therefore is, to teach and help us to plead with God in prayer, for the things which we want. And this will appear evidently by the next scripture.

4. Text. Gal. iv. 6. *God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* That is, the Spirit of God inclines and teaches us to address God in prayer, as our Father. And so it is explained; Rom. viii. 15. *Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* It may be noted here, that this Spirit of adoption belongs to every true christian in more or less degrees, otherwise the apostle's reasoning would not appear strong and convincing. *Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, &c.*

5. Text. Ephes. vi. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.* These words ἐν πνεύματι [*in the Spirit,*] have reference to the work of the Spirit of God in us, for so the words ἐν πνεύματι signifies in other places of the New Testament; Matt. xii. 28. *I cast out devils by the Spirit of God.* Luke ii. 27. *He came by the Spirit into the temple.* 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9. *To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom, to another knowledge, by the same Spirit, &c.* In this verse of the epistle to the Ephesians, it cannot properly signify praying with our own spirit, that is, with the intention of our own minds, because that seems to be implied in the next words, *watching thereunto.*

Objection. Some will say still, that this praying in the Spirit was to be performed by an extraordinary gift, which was communicated to the apostles, and many others in the first age of christianity. Something like the gift of tongues at Pentecost, and various gifts among the Corinthians, when they prayed, and preached and sung by inspiration. 1 *Cor.* xiv.

Answer. Whatsoever there was of extraordinary and miraculous communications of the Spirit in those first days of the gospel, we pretend not to the same now. But the assistances of the Spirit, whereof we speak, are in some measure attainable by

christians in all ages; for in this Ephes. vi. 18. *Praying in the Spirit* is enjoined to all believers, and at all times, with all sorts of prayer. Now it is not to be supposed, that at all times, and in all sorts of prayer, christians should have this extraordinary gift.

We may also farther remark, that the gift of prayer itself is not expressed as such an extraordinary and miraculous gift, neither in the prophecy of *Joel*, chap. ii. nor in *Acts*, chap. ii. where that prophecy of Joel is accomplished; nor is it mentioned particularly in the epistles of St. Paul, among the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, in those places where they are enumerated. But only the gift of prayer in an *unknown tongue* seems to be spoken of in 1 *Cor.* xiv. which rather refers to the gift of tongues, than to that of prayer. And it is not unlikely, that the omission or silence of the gift of prayer in those texts, might be designed for this very purpose, viz. That though there were gifts of prayer by immediate inspiration in those days; yet that there should be no bar laid against the expectations of christians in all ages, of some divine assistances in prayer, by a pretence that this was only an extraordinary gift to the apostles, and the first christians.

6. Text. *James* v 16. which we translate *the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous.* In the original it is, δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, the inwrought prayer. This word is used to signify persons possessed with a good or evil spirit, and it signifies here prayer wrought in us by the good Spirit that possesses us, that leads us and guides us. And the word is used in this sense several times in 1 *Cor.* xii. where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are spoken of. Yet let it be observed, that here the apostle is speaking of such an inwrought prayer as all christians might be capable of; for his epistle is directed to all *the scattered tribes of Israel,* James i. 1. and he bids them all *confess their faults to one another, and pray for one another, that they might be healed;* and for this reason, because the inwrought prayer of the righteous availeth much.

The last text I shall mention is *Jude,* ver. 20. *Praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.* Now this epistle is written to all *that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved and called in Jesus Christ,* ver. 1. They are all directed to pray by the assistance of the Holy Ghost. And those who *have not this Spirit,* in ver. 19. are said to be *sensual.* I confess, the Holy Spirit hath been in a great measure so long departed from his churches, that we are tempted to think, that all his operations, in exhortation, in prayer, and preaching, belong only to the first age of christianity, and to the extraordinary ministers, prophets, and apostles; and it was from this absence of the Spirit, that men proceeded to invent various methods to supply the want of him in prayer, by paternosters, beads, litanies, responses, and other forms, some good and some bad, to which they confined the churches, to keep up the form of worship, and the attention of the people; and at best, we are left by many teachers to the use of our mere natural powers, our reason and memory: And hence spring those reproachful expressions about the Spirit of prayer, and the endless labours of men to make this word signify only the temper and disposition of the mind: So *the Spirit of adoption,* in their sense, is nothing but a child-like temper, and the Spirit of prayer means nothing else but a praying frame of heart.

But since some texts expressly speak of the Holy Spirit, as working these things in us, since in many scriptures the Spirit of God is promised to be given us, to dwell in us, and be in us, and to assist in prayer; why should we industriously exclude him from the hearts of the saints, and thrust him out of those scriptures, wheresoever the words will possibly endure any other sense? it is in my opinion much more natural and reasonable, for us to interpret those places where the Spirit is mentioned, according to

the plain language of clear texts, where the name of God's own Spirit is written. However, if a man will but allow the Spirit of God, and his assistances in prayer, to be mentioned in any one text of scripture, so far as to be persuaded and encouraged thereby to seek those assistances that he may pray better, I will not be angry with him, that he cannot find this Spirit in every text where others believe he is spoken of and designed.

II. The second argument for the aids of the Holy Spirit in prayer, is drawn from collateral scriptures, and such are all those texts which represent the blessed Spirit as the spring of all that is good in us, and shew us that all other duties of the christian life are to be performed in and by this Holy Spirit. Saints are *born of this Spirit;* John iii. 6. Are *led by the Spirit;* Rom. viii. 14. *Walk in the Spirit;* Gal. v. 16. *Live in the Spirit,* ver. 25. By this *Spirit mortify the deeds of the body;* Rom. viii. 13. *The Spirit convinces of sin;* John xvi. 9. and fits us for confession. *The Spirit witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of God;* Rom. viii. 16. and thereby furnishes us with thanksgivings. The Spirit sanctifies us and fills us with love, and faith, and humility, and every grace that is needful in the work of prayer. Why then should men take so much pains to hinder us from *praying by the Spirit* when it is only by this Spirit we can walk with God, and *have access* to God; *Ephes.* ii. 18.

III. The third argument to prove that the Spirit of God doth sometimes assist men in the work of prayer is, the experience of all christians with regard to the grace of prayer, and many christians in the exercise of the gift of it too. The great difference that is between some believers and others in this respect, even where their natural abilities are equal; and the difference that is between believers themselves at different times and seasons, seems to denote the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit. Some persons at some special seasons will break out into a divine rapture in prayer, and be carried far beyond themselves: Their thoughts, their desires, their language, and every thing that belongs to their prayer, seems to have something of heaven in it. I will allow that in some persons this may be ascribed to a great degree of understanding, invention, fancy, memory, and natural affections of the mind, and volubility of the tongue: But many times also it shall be observed, that those persons who have this gift of prayer in exercise, do not excel nor equal the rest of their neighbours in fancy, invention, passion or eloquence; it may be, they are persons of very mean parts, and below the common capacity of mankind. Nor can it be always imputed to an overflow of animal nature, and warm imagination, at those times when they are carried out in prayer thus beyond themselves; for this happens sometimes when they find their natural spirits not raised nor exalted, but the powers of nature labour perhaps under a decay and great languishings, and they can hardly speak or think about common affairs. I wish these testimonies to the aids of the Holy Spirit were more frequent amongst us.

Reflection. And it may be remarked, that those who despise this gift of the Holy Spirit, will deride the persons that pretend to any share of it, as foolish, stupid, ignorant wretches, and will represent them generally as unlearned and sottish creatures, dull and unthinking; and yet when this objection is made, whence comes this fluency? this fervour, and this wonderful ability of pouring out the soul before God in prayer, which the scoffers themselves cannot imitate? Oh! then it is attributed to our wit, our memory, our invention, our fancy, our vehement affections, our confidence, or impudence, to any thing rather than to the Spirit of God, because they are resolved to oppose his power, and deny his work in the hearts of believers.

I might here add citations from the articles and liturgy of the church of England, to confirm the doctrine of the aids of the Holy Spirit in our religious performances. *We have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good-will, and working with us when we have that good-will;* Art. 10. *The working of the Spirit—drawing up the mind to high and heavenly things;* Art. 17. And this ordinary work of the Holy Spirit in all believers, is called the *inspiration of the Holy Spirit;* Art. 13. *O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;* second collect at evening prayer. And a little after; *Almighty God, who hast given us grace to make our common supplications.* And in the collect the fifth Sunday after Easter,—*Grant that by thy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same.* Again, *Almighty God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service;* 13th Sunday after Trinity. *Grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts;* 19th Sunday after Trinity. Homily 16th, page 1, 2, asserts the *secret and mighty working of God's Holy Spirit which is within us: For it is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, stirring up good and godly motions in their heart.* Many more expressions of this kind might be collected from the homilies and public prayers of the church of England. So that one would think none of that communion should throw reproach and scandal upon the assistances of the Holy Spirit in good works and religious duties.

SECTION II.

HOW THE SPIRIT ASSISTS US IN PRAYER.

IT is evident then, that there is such a thing as the assistance of the Spirit of God in the work of prayer, but how far this assistance extends, is a further subject of enquiry: And it is very necessary to have a just notion of the nature and bounds of this divine influence, that we may not expect more than God has promised, nor sit down negligently contented without such degrees as may be attained. Persons in this, as in most other cases, are very ready to run away with extremes. They either attribute too much or too little to the Holy Spirit.

In my judgment, those persons attribute *too little* to the Spirit of prayer, 1. Who say there is no more assistance to be expected in prayer, than in any ordinary and common affair of life; as when a plowman *breaks the clods of his ground, and casts in the wheat and the barley, his God doth instruct him to discretion, and teach him;* Isaiah xxviii. 24, 25, 26. But this is, in effect, to deny his special influences.—2. Those who allow the Spirit of God merely to excite some holy motions in the heart while they pray, and to awaken something of grace into exercise, according to the words of a prayer; but that he does nothing towards our obtaining the ability or gift of praying, nor at all assists us in the exercise of the gift with proper matter, method, or expression. I persuade myself, the scriptures cited in the foregoing section, concerning praying in the Spirit, can never be explained this way in their full meaning; and I hope to make it apparent in this section, that the Holy Spirit hath more hand in prayer, than both these opinions allow.

I think also on the other hand, those persons expect *too much* from the Spirit in our day, 1. Who wait for all their inclinations to pray, from immediate and present dictates

of the Spirit of God; who will never pray but when the Spirit moves them. I find in scripture frequent exhortations to pray, and commands to *pray always*, that is, to pray upon all occasions; yet I find no promise nor encouragement to expect the Holy Spirit will, by sudden and immediate impulses in a sensible way, dictate to me every season of prayer. For though the Spirit of God should sometimes withdraw himself in his influences, yet my duty and obligation to constant prayer still remain.

2. Those who expect such aids of the Holy Spirit, as to make their prayers become the proper work of inspiration; such as the prayers of David and Moses, and others recorded in scripture. Let us not be so fond as to persuade ourselves that these workings of the Holy Spirit in ministers, or in common christians, while they teach, or exhort, or pray, arise to the character of those miraculous gifts that were given to the apostles and primitive believers; such as are described in the church of Corinth, and elsewhere. For at those times a whole sermon, or a whole prayer together, was a constant impulse of the Holy Spirit, perhaps for the words, as well as all the matter of it, which made it truly divine. But in our prayers, the Spirit of God leaves us much to ourselves, to mingle many weaknesses and defects with our duties, both in the matter and in the manner, and in the words; so that we cannot say of one whole sentence, that it is the perfect or the pure work of the Spirit of God. And we should run the danger of blasphemy, to entitle the Spirit of God to every thing that we speak in prayer, as well as to exclude all his assistance from all the prayers of the saints in our day.

3. Those who hope for such influences of the Spirit as to render their own study and labours needless; who never have given diligence to furnish themselves in a rational way with an ability to pray, upon presumption of those divine impulses; nor upon any occasion will premeditate beforehand, but rush upon the duty, as Peter went out at Christ's command to walk upon the water, and hope to be upheld and carried through all the duty without their own forethought: They will cite the text which was given to the disciples; Matt. x. 19. *When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* But this text has quite another design. It may be questioned whether this word of Christ forbids them all premeditation, but only an anxious and solicitous fear and care, as we are bid to *take no thought for the morrow;* Matt. vi. 34. that is, be not over solicitous or disquieted about provision for the morrow. But if Christ did utterly forbid them all preparation, yet that command and promise to the apostles in miraculous times, when they should appear before magistrates, can never be given to encourage the sloth and laziness of every common christian in our day, when he appears in worship before God. Now in order to find the happy medium between these two extremes, of attributing too much or too little to the Spirit of prayer, I have diligently consulted the word of God: And so far as I am able to judge or determine, his assistance in prayer may be reduced to the following particulars:

I. He bestows upon us our natural capacities, some degree of understanding, judgment, memory, invention, and natural affections; some measure of confidence and liberty of speech, and readiness to utter the conceptions of our mind. And this he doth to believers in common with other men, for *every good gift comes from God;* James i. 17. And in a particular manner the third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, is generally represented as the agent in such sort of operations, especially where they relate to religion.

II. He blesses our diligence in reading, hearing, meditation, study, and attempts of prayer; whereby, while we attend to useful rules and instructions, we treasure up a store of matter for this duty, and learn by degrees to express our thoughts with propriety and decency, to our own and others' edification. Thus he adds a blessing to our studies, in order to grow in the knowledge of the things of God as christians; and in the learning of tongues to interpret scripture, and in the holy skill of exhortation, in order to become able ministers. All these are called *spiritual gifts*, because, as is before shewn, in the primitive times, they were given on the sudden, in an extraordinary manner, without laborious study to acquire them; but in our day, these are to be obtained and improved by labour and use, by repeated trials, by time and experience, and the ordinary blessing of the Spirit of God: And the same must be said concerning the gift of prayer. He sanctifies our memory, to treasure up such parts of the holy scripture as are proper to be used in prayer; he makes it faithful to retain them; and ready in the recollection of them at proper seasons. If men become skilful in any faculty, and especially that belongs to religion, it is justly attributed to God and his Spirit; for if *he teaches the plowman to manage wisely in sowing and reaping;* Isaiah xxviii. 26, 29. much more doth he teach the christian to pray. *He divides to every one* what gifts he pleases, and *works according to his good pleasure;* 1 Cor. xii. from ver. 4. to ver. 11. All secondary helps and means when well attended to, and well applied, are made successful by his powerful benediction. And we may say to those christians who have the greatest gifts in prayer, *who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou hast not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. For if we *live not by bread alone, but by every word* of power and blessing *that proceeds from the mouth of God;* Matt. iv. 4. much more may we say concerning the spiritual improvements of the mind, that they are not attained by our labour alone, but by the good Spirit of God making our labours prosperous.

III. He inclines our hearts to pray, and keeps them intent upon the work. By nature there is in all men an estrangedness from God, and there is too much of it remaining in the best. There is a natural reluctance to the duties of immediate communion with God, and a weariness in them. It is only the Spirit of God that works a heavenly frame in us, that makes us ready to *pray always*, and excites us to take occasion from the several concerns of our souls, or from the affairs of life, to go to the mercy-seat, and to abide there. It is he that kindly and secretly suggests, *Now is the accepted time.* The Spirit says to the soul secretly, *Seek my face*, and the soul replies, *thy face, O God, will I seek;* Psalm xxvii. 8. The Spirit saith, come to God by prayer, as well as to Christ by faith; *Rev.* xxii. 19. It is he that enlarges the desires towards God, and gives silent intimations of audience and acceptance. By his good motions he overcomes our delay, and answers the carnal objections of our sinful and slothful hearts. He gives our spirits liberty for the work, as well as in it, and recalls our thoughts when wandering from God in worship, whether they be drawn away by our eyes, or our ears, or our busy fancies, or the suggestions of the evil one. It is the Holy Spirit that holds us to the duty, in opposition to all discouragements, and makes us *wrestle and strive with God*, in prayer, *pour out our hearts before him*, and *stir up ourselves to take hold of him*, agreeable to the language of those scriptures, *Gen.* xxxii. 24. *Rom.* xv. 30. *Psalm* lxii. 8. *Isaiah* lxiv. 7. Now the means which the Spirit of God generally uses to bring us to prayer, and keep us to the duty, is by working in our souls a lively sense of the

necessity and advantage of it, or giving us some refreshment or delight, in and by it. And if, when we are engaged in our worldly affairs, or in divine worship, the devil is permitted by sudden violent impressions on the fancy, to draw our hearts away to sinful objects, why should it be counted a strange thing, that the blessed Spirit should cast in holy motions and encouragements to the duty?

IV. He oftentimes, by his secret teachings, supplies us with the matter of prayer. This is the express language of holy scripture, Rom. viii. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us,* and that *according to the mind or will of God,* ver. 27. All the senses that the wit of man has contrived to put upon this scripture, to exclude the work of the Spirit of God, are very much forced and strained, to make them signify any thing else.

It is plain that we know not what is good for ourselves; *Eccles.* vi. 12. and we of ourselves should often ask for things hurtful to us; *James* iv. 3. We are not acquainted with our own wants, nor the method of our relief. *It is the Spirit that must convince us of sin and righteousness;* of our sin and the righteousness of Christ; *John* xvi. 9. He is a Spirit of illumination in all the affairs of religion: it is he alone that *searches the deep things of God,* that knows what God hath prepared for believers; 1 *Cor.* ii. 9. And therefore *he makes intercession,* or teaches us to pray for things agreeable to the divine will and purpose. He now and then also gives a hint of some argument to plead with God; either the name or mediation of Christ, or some of his own promises in the gospel for he is promised *to take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto us;* John xiv. 26. and John xvi. 13, 14, 15. It is he that brings divine things to our remembrance: such things as are suited to the several parts of prayer. He sets the glory and the majesty of God before our eyes, and furnishes us with matter for adoration. By bringing sin to our remembrance, he fits us for confession; and by causing us to reflect on our many mercies, richly supplies us with thanksgivings. Now, since the evil spirit is said *to pluck the good seed of the word of God out of the heart;* Matt. xiii. 19. why may we not suppose the good Spirit to put good thoughts into the heart, to prepare and furnish us for such a duty as prayer? And such kind of influences as these are called the good motions of the Spirit of God, which christians of almost every sect and persuasion will allow in some degree.

V. When the Spirit of God supplies us largely with matter in prayer, he doth in some measure influence the method too. Method is but the disposition of the materials of a prayer one after another. Now as it is impossible our tongues should speak all these together, so it is not possible our minds should receive all the kind hints of them from the Spirit at once, but successively one after another, as seems good to him. Sometimes he fills our souls with so deep and penitent a sense of our past sins, that we break out before God into humble confessions in the very beginning of prayer. *O Lord I am vile, what shall I answer thee? Mine iniquities are gone over my head, and the number of them is infinite.* And perhaps the soul dwells upon its humiliations, through almost all the time of worship.

At another time the Spirit works as the spirit of joy and thanksgiving; and the first words the lips utter, are the language of gratitude and praise: *I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that though the mysteries of the gospel are hidden from the wise and prudent, yet thou hast revealed them unto babes.* Sometimes the soul is so inflamed with desire after such a particular grace, or mortification of some special sin, that almost from

every part of prayer, from adoration, confession, thanksgiving, &c. it will fetch some argument for bestowing that mercy; and at every turn insert that special petition, enforcing it with new arguments and pleadings.

Thus though the beautiful connexion of one sentence with another, and the smooth and easy transition from one part of prayer to another, be left much to ourselves; yet the mere order of those materials, which the Holy Spirit gives in, while we pray, will be in some degree under his direction or influence. And if we may understand those words of Elihu in a literal sense, *Job* xxxvii. 19. we have need of assistance in matter, method, and every thing, when we speak to God; and may well cry out, *Lord, teach us what we should say to thee, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness;* we need light and instruction from thee, to frame our speeches, and to put them in order.

VI. The Spirit may be said to give some assistance also toward apt and proper expression in prayer. For he concurs in an ordinary way to the exercise of our natural and acquired faculties of knowledge, memory, vivacity of spirit, readiness of speech, and holy confidence, whereby we express those thoughts which he hath excited in us in a becoming manner. And this he doth also in preaching, and conferring upon the things of God, and this more eminently in the work of prayer; so that hereby a believer is able at sometimes to pour out his soul, before God, with a fulness of thought, and variety of expression, to the great comfort of his own soul, and the edification of his fellow-worshippers. St. Paul speaks of this *boldness* and *utterance*, as a spiritual gift; 1 *Cor.* i. 5. and 2 *Cor.* viii. 7. And he often prayed for this confidence and freedom of speech, this παῤῥησια in preaching; *Eph.* vi. 19. *Col.* iv. 3, 4. And we also have reason to ask it of God in prayer; for it is as necessary also in that duty for carrying on the work of grace in our hearts, and the building up of the church, the body of Christ, for which all gifts are given.

I might add also, that as the Holy Spirit frequently, by secret hints, supplies us with the matter of prayer, he by that very means assists us toward expression; for expression is but the clothing our thoughts or ideas in proper words. Now in this state, where the soul and body are so united, the most part of the ideas and conceptions of our mind are so joined to words, that words arise as it were mingled with those ideas or conceptions, which the Holy Spirit awakens within us. And we may humbly hope, that when he hath given us some secret whispers *what we should pray for*, he will at least so far enable us to use proper expressions, as may convey the same thoughts and matter to those who join with us in worship. Especially when proper materials of prayer are brought to our mind in scripture expressions, in some sense *these are words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, that Spirit which is promised *to bring to our remembrance* the things which Christ hath taught us. But this is more evidently so at the time, when, together with these expressions, the graces of prayer are wrought up to a lively exercise, which is the next step of the assistance of the Spirit.

VII. He excites those graces in us, which are suited to the duty of prayer. He spiritualizes our natural affections, and fixes them on proper objects, and enlarges and heightens their activity. When sin is recollected, he awakens anger, shame and sorrow. When God is revealed to the mind in his glory and justice, he overspreads the soul with holy awe, and humble fear. When the Lord Jesus Christ, and his redemption, are upon the thoughts, the Holy Spirit warms and raises our desire and love. We are in ourselves cold and dead to spiritual things, he makes us lively in prayer, and holds us

to the work; he begets a holy reverence of God while we adore him: He works in us delight in God, and longing desires after him; fervency and importunity in our petitions for spiritual mercies, submission and resignation to the will of God in temporal things; faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and hope in the promises of the gospel, while we plead with God for an answer to our prayers; he fills us also with holy joy and exultation in God, while we recollect in prayer his glories or his benefits, and awakens all the springs of thankfulness. As these qualities, in their first operation, are attributed to the Spirit of God, which it is not my present business to prove, so in their constant exercise in every duty, they want his farther assistance and efficacy, since *of ourselves*, an apostle could say, *we are not sufficient for one good thought;* 1 Cor. iii. 5. *but all our sufficiency is of God;* it is God of his good pleasure *worketh in us both to will and to do;* Phil. ii. 13. He gives us sincere aims and designs in our petitions; for as to the manner of our prayers, there is the assistance of the Spirit necessary, as well as the matter; and it is hinted in the text before cited; Rom. viii. 26. *We know not what to pray for, as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth us.* He influences our minds with a true and upright aim at the glory of God and our salvation; for otherwise we are ready *to ask* good things *amiss, that we may spend them on our lusts;* James iv. 3. This work of the Spirit in awakening our graces, though it be mentioned last, yet it often begins before the prayer, and precedes his other influences, or our own labour in speaking to God.

Thus have I delivered my sentiments at large, concerning the extent of the influences of the Spirit of God in prayer, and have shewn how he qualifies us habitually for prayer, actually disposes and prepares us for it, and gives us present assistance in it. And after all I would say, that the most considerable and common assistance in prayer, which is peculiarly attributed to the blessed Spirit as a Spirit of prayer, and may be expected from him in our day, consists chiefly in this; the putting our souls into a praying frame, the stirring up holy motions and breathings after God, giving secret hints of our real wants, and of arguments and promises to plead with God, awakening the graces of love, fear, hope, and joy, that are suited to this duty; and it is chiefly upon this account that he is called *a Spirit of grace and supplication.* When these are raised to a high degree, the heart will have a natural influence upon the invention, the memory, the language, and the voice. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak.* And for the most part, the utterance will be proportionable to the degree of inward affection, and to the natural and acquired abilities of the person that prays; excepting some rare and glorious instances, where men are carried beyond themselves, by the uncommon presence of the Divine Spirit.

I might venture upon this subject, to make an address to those persons who will entertain nothing in religion but what appears agreeable to principles of reason and philosophy, and yet have taken liberty to scoff at divine assistances in the duty of prayer. Let me entreat you, Sirs, to tell me what is there in this doctrine that is unreasonable to assert, or unbecoming a philosopher to believe? If the great God has required every man to pray, and will hear and reward the humble and sincere worshipper; why may we not suppose he is so compassionate as to help us in this work which he requires? Is not he full of goodness, and ready to accept those sinners that return to him? and why shall not the same goodness incline him to assist those that desire and attempt a return? Why may he not by secret impressions draw out farther the desires of that soul that already

breathes after him, when he sees the spirit willing and feeble, and thus sweetly encourage the worship he delights in, and prepare his servants for his own reward?

This address may be repeated to christians that profess the doctrine of the holy Trinity with much more force and argument. Do you believe the almighty God sent his own Son to teach us how to pray, and when we are taught the right way, why may not his own Spirit assist in the performance? Hath Jesus Christ purchased heaven for us, and may not the Spirit be permitted to incline us to ask for that heaven, and awaken our desires to seek it? When the Son of God saw us perishing in guilt and misery, did he descend and relieve and save us by dying for us? And when the Spirit of God beholds a poor creature willing to receive this relief and salvation, and yet is afraid to venture into the presence of an offended God; why may he not give secret hints of encouragement, and draw out the addresses of the heart and lips to a God that is willing to pardon? When he sees an humble sinner labouring and striving to break through temptations, to lay aside vain thoughts, to put carnal things far away from the mind, and to converse with God alone; why may he not impress some divine thoughts upon him, stir up devout and strong affections, make him surmount his difficulties, and raise him a little towards his heavenly Father? Since he has given him faculties of memory, invention, and speech; why may he not assist those faculties when directed towards himself, and make them swifter and warmer in their advances toward God? To what purpose is the blessed Spirit mentioned so often in the New Testament as one that helps forward the salvation of men? To what purpose does he sustain so many characters and offices in scripture? and to what end is he so often promised to christians, to be with them, and dwell in them as a most glorious blessing of the gospel; if he be not permitted to do so much as this in assisting men to draw near to their Maker, and helping the children of God on earth, to converse with their *Father which is in heaven?* Now, if such condescensions as these are not unworthy of the blessed God, why should it be unworthy of a man or a christian to believe them and hope for them?

SECTION III.

CAUTIONS ABOUT THE INFLUENCES OF THE SPIRIT.

THERE are many practical cases that arise upon this subject, of the assistance of the Spirit of prayer, which exercise the thoughts of honest and pious persons. It is not my purpose here to enlarge in this way; yet that I may prevent or obviate some difficulties, I would lay down these few cautions:

I. Do not believe all manner of impulses, or urgent impressions of the mind to go and pray, proceed always from the blessed Spirit. Sometimes the mere terrors of conscience, awakened under sense of guilt and danger, will urge a natural man to go to prayer. So the sailors in Jonah's ship, when surprized with a storm, each of them fell a praying. Though the Spirit of God, in his own operations, makes much use of the consciences of men to carry on his own work, yet when these inward impulses to pray arise merely from some affrightening providence, or sudden conviction, and torment of mind, and thus drag us into the presence of God, without any assistance and strength to perform the duty, and

without much regard to the success of the duty, we may justly fear the Holy Spirit of God hath not much hand in such impulses; for he both assists in the duty, and makes us solicitous about the success of it. Sometimes Satan himself may so far *transform himself into an angel of light*, as to hurry and impel a person to go and pray. But his impulses are generally violent and unseasonable. When we are engaged in some other business that is the proper duty of that season, he tyrannically commands in a moment to leave all, and go aside and pray. But the Spirit of God draws us to God at a fit season, so as never to thrust out another necessary duty toward God, or toward men. *He is a God of order*, and his Spirit always excites to the proper duty of the hour; wherefore Satan would but divert us from one business, by forcing us away to another, and then leave us to our own weakness in it, and vex us afterward with accusations.

II. Do not expect the influences of the Spirit of prayer should be so vehement and sensible, as certainly to distinguish them from the motions of your own spirits: For the Spirit of God generally acts towards his people, agreeable to the dispensation under which they are, either in a more sensible, or a more imperceptible way. *Under the Old Testament*, the Spirit of God often carried the prophets away, as if it were in an ecstacy beyond themselves; their style, their gesture, as well as inward commotions of heart, were frequently different from the common manner of men, and did sufficiently evidence to themselves, and in some measure to others also, that they were under the impressions of the Holy Spirit at special seasons. *Under the New Testament*, the apostles had a more constant and habitual assistance of the Spirit, though it was extraordinary also; and in a calmer way were influenced in prayer and preaching more agreeable to rational nature; though without doubt they themselves well knew when they were under the certain conduct of the Holy Spirit. *In our day*, when we have no reason to expect extraordinary inspirations, the Spirit of God usually leads us in so soft and silent a manner, agreeable to the temper of our own spirits, and concurrent circumstances of life, that his workings are not to be easily distinguished by ourselves or others, from the rational motions of our own hearts, influenced by moral arguments; though by the holy tendency, and the sanctifying effects, we know we had some assistance from the blessed Spirit. Such are his operations generally in conversion, sanctification and consolation: He works so connaturally and sweetly with our own spirits, that we cannot certainly distinguish his working by any vehemence or strength of impression; but it is best known by the favour and relish of divine things that we then feel in our souls, and by consequent fruits of sanctification in our hearts and lives.

III. Though we have not any sure ground to expect extraordinary influences from the Spirit of prayer in our day, yet we ought not to deny them utterly; for God hath no where bound himself not to bestow them: The chief ends, for which immediate inspirations were given, are long ceased among us where the gospel is so well established: Yet there have not been wanting instances in every age of some extraordinary testimonies of the Spirit of God to the truth of the gospel, both for conviction of unbelievers, and for the instruction, encouragement, and consolation of his own people.

In the conversion of a sinner, the Spirit's work is usually gradual, and begun and carried on by providences, sermons, occasional thoughts and moral arguments, from time to time, till at last the man is become *a new creature*, and resolves heartily to give up himself to Christ according to the encouragements of the gospel. Yet there are now and

then some surprizing and sudden conversions wrought by the over-powering influences of the Holy Spirit, something like the conversion of St. Paul.

In the consolation of saints, the Spirit generally assists their own minds in comparing their hearts with the rule of the word, and makes it appear *they are the children of God*, by finding the characters of adoption in themselves; this is his ordinary way of witnessing; but there are instances when the Spirit of God hath in a more immediate manner spoken consolation, and constrained the poor trembling believer to receive it: And this hath been evidenced to be divine, by the humility and advancing holiness that hath followed upon it.

So it is in prayer. The ordinary assistances of the Spirit, given in our day to ministers, or private christians in their utmost extent, imply no more than what I have described in the foregoing chapter: But there are instances wherein the Spirit of God hath carried a devout person in worship far beyond his own natural and acquired powers in the exercise of the gift of prayer, and raised him to an uncommon and exalted degree of the exercise of praying graces, very near to those divine impulses which the primitive christians enjoyed.

If a minister in a public assembly has been enabled to make his addresses to God with such a flow of divine eloquence, and spread the cases of the whole assembly before the Lord in such expressive language, that almost every one present hath been ready to confess, surely he knew all my heart; if they have all felt something of a divine power attending his words, drawing their hearts near to the throne, and giving them a taste of heaven; if sinners have been converted in numbers, and saints have been made triumphant in grace, and received blessed advantages toward glory: I would not be afraid to say, *surely God is in this place present with the extraordinary power and influence of his Spirit.*

If a christian hath been taught by this Spirit making intercession in him to plead with God for some particular mercy in such an unwonted strain of humble and heavenly argument, that he has found in himself secret and inward assurances, that the mercy should be bestowed, by something of a prophetical impulse, and has never been mistaken; if grace has been in vigorous exercise in the prayer, and afterwards the success has always answered his expectation; I should not forbear to believe the extraordinary presence of the Spirit of prayer with him at that season. Dr. Winter in Ireland, and several ministers and private christians of the last age in Scotland, are notable and glorious instances of this gracious appearance of the Holy Spirit.

If a serious and humble worshipper, that hath been long seeking after the knowledge of some divine truth, should find himself enlightened upon his knees, with a beam of heavenly light shining upon that truth with most peculiar evidence, and teaching him more in one prayer than he had learned by months of labour and study; I should venture to acknowledge the immediate aids and answers of the Spirit of prayer and illumination. Luther is said to have enjoyed such divine favours, at the reformation of the church from popish darkness.

If a holy soul hath been conflicting with doubts and fears, and waiting upon God in all his appointed ways of grace, seeking consolation and assurance of the love of God: If while he hath been at *the throne of grace*, he has beheld God as his God, smiling and reconciled, and as it were seen the work of God on his own heart, in a bright and convincing light; and perhaps by some comfortable word of scripture impressed on his thoughts, hath been assured of his love to God, and the love of God to him: If from that

immediate sensation of divine love he has been filled *with joy unspeakable and full of glory,* as well as warmed with heavenly zeal for the honour of God, his God and Father; I must believe such a one to be sealed as a child of God, by the sweet influence of the Spirit of adoption, teaching him to pray, and cry, *Abba, Father.*

But concerning such workings of the Spirit of God as these are, because there have been many vain and foolish pretences to them, I would make three remarks:

1. These are rare instances, and bestowed by the Spirit of God in so sovereign and arbitary a manner, according to the secret counsels of his own wisdom, that no particular christian hath any sure ground to expect them. Though I am persuaded there are many more instances of them in secret, among pious and humble souls, than ever came to public notice.—2. They are best judged of, and distinguished from the mere effects of a warm fancy, and from the spirit of delusion, not so much by the brightness and vehemence of the present impression, as by their agreeableness to the standing rule of the word of God, and their influence towards humility and growing holiness. There is therefore the same rule to judge of the uncommon as well as the common assistances of this *Spirit of supplication.*—3. How near soever these rare and extraordinary impulses come to the inspiration of the apostles and first christians in the truth and power of them, yet they fall far short in the distinct evidence: For the Spirit of God hath not taught us so far to distinguish any particular parts or paragraph, even of such an extraordinary prayer, as that any one can say, these are perfect divine inspirations; because he would have nothing stand in competition with his written word, as the rule of faith and practice of his saints.

IV. Do not make the gift of prayer, the measure of your judgment concerning the Spirit of prayer. If we follow this rule, there are three cases where we may be led into mistake: The first case is, when the gift is in great and lively exercise. Have a care of believing, that all those persons *pray by the Spirit,* who pronounce very pious expressions with great seeming fervency, and much volubility of speech; when, it may be, their behaviour and character in the world is sinful and abominable in the sight of God. It is true indeed, the Spirit of God sometimes bestows considerable gifts upon persons that are unconverted; but we are not immediately to believe, that every thing that is bright and beautiful is the peculiar work of the Spirit in our day, unless we have some reason to hope the person is also one of the sons of God.

Much less can we suppose, that noisy gesture, a distorted countenance, violence and vociferation are any signs of the presence of the divine Spirit; sometimes indeed the extraordinary anguish of mind, or inward fervour of affection, have extorted from the saints of God loud complaints and groanings. David sometimes practised this, as appears in his Psalms. Jesus Christ himself, when pressed with sorrows heavier than man could bear, *offered strong cries and tears in the days of his flesh;* Heb. v 7. and we are sure, the Spirit of prayer was with him. But there may be great noise, and violent commotions used to make a shew of fervency and power, and with a design to make up the want of inward devotion. God himself was indeed present at Sinai with thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet once; *Exod.* xix. But another time when he came down to visit Elijah, he *was not in the earthquake, nor in the tempest, but in the still small voice;* 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

I would not impute the difference between the prayers of one minister and another, one christian and another, merely to the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit. Na-

tural constitutions, capacities, acquirements, natural affections, and providential circumstances can make a great difference. Nor would I impute the difference that is between the prayers of the same true christians at different seasons only, to the unequal assistances of the blessed Spirit; for many other things may concur to make them more or less cold or fervent, dull or lively, in the exercise of the gift of prayer.

The second case wherein we may be in danger of mistake is, Where there is but a small measure of the gift of prayer. How ready are some persons to judge the Spirit of prayer is absent from the heart of that person that speaks to God, if he hath but a mean and contemptible gift? if he seems to repeat the same things over again, if he labours under want of words, or expresses his thoughts in improper or disagreeable language; if he hath no beauty of connexion between his sentences, and hath little order or method in the several parts of prayer. Now, though such persons that have so very small and despicable a talent should not be forward to speak in prayer in a great assembly, or among strangers, till by practice in a more private way they have attained more of this holy skill; yet there may be much of the Spirit of prayer in the hearts of some such persons as these.

It may be they are young christians lately converted, and are but beginning to learn to pray. The business of praying is a new work to them, though their zeal be warm and their hearts lively in grace. And natural bashfulness may sometimes hinder the exercise of a good gift in prayer. Or it may be they have very low natural parts, a poor invention and memory, a barrenness of words, or some difficulty or unhappiness in their common way of expressing themselves about other affairs; they may be some of those *foolish things of this world that God hath called* to the knowledge of his Son, and filled their hearts with rich grace; but grace doth not so far exalt nature, as to change a dull genius and low capacity into a sprightliness of thought and vivacity of language. Or perhaps they have long disused themselves from praying in public, and at first when they are called to it again, they may be much at a loss as to the gift of prayer, though grace may be in its advances in the soul. Or perhaps they are in the lively exercises of deep humility and mourning before God under a sense of guilt, or overwhelmed with fears of divine desertion, or conflicting and wrestling hard with some hurrying temptation, or under a present depression of mind by some heavy sorrow, and may be in the case of David; *Psalm* lxxvii. 4. when he was *so troubled that he could not speak.* Or finally, God may withhold from them the exercise of the gift of prayer to punish them with shame and confusion for some neglected duty, and chastises them, it may be, for carelessness in seeking after this holy skill of speaking to God, though some graces, such as zeal and love, may be at work in the heart.

Sometimes it may happen that the Spirit of prayer is communicated in a great degree to an humble christian, who falls into many thoughtless indecencies of gesture in prayer, or delivers his sentences with a most unhappy tone of voice: Perhaps he was never taught to practise decency when he was young, and such ill habits are not easily cured afterward. We are not therefore to despise and be offended at all such prayers, but endeavour to separate what is pious and divine from the human frailty and weakness, to pity such persons heartily, and be so much the more excited ourselves to seek after every thing that is agreeable in the gift of prayer.

The third case wherein we are in danger of mistake, is, When the gift is not exercised at all. Some persons have been ready to imagine they could not pray by the

Spirit, but when they exercised the gift of prayer themselves: But this is a great mistake. For though one person be the mouth of the rest to God, yet every one that joins with him, may be justly said to *pray in Spirit*, if all the graces that are suited to the duty of prayer, and to the expressions that are then used, are found in exercise and lively vigour. And it is possible that a poor humble christian may pray in the Spirit, in the secret and silence of his heart, while the person that speaks to God in the name of others, hath very little or nothing of the Spirit of God with him, or when the words of the prayer are a known and prescribed form. Though the Spirit of prayer, in the common language of christians, is never applied to the exercise of the gift where there is no grace; yet it is often applied to the exercise of the grace of prayer, without any regard to the gift.

V. Do not expect the same measures of assistance at all times from the Spirit of prayer. He has no where bound himself to be always present with his people in the same degrees of influence; though he will never utterly forsake those of whose heart he has taken possession as his temple and residence. He is compared to the wind, by our Lord Jesus Christ; John iii. *The wind blows where*, and when *it listeth*, and is not always equal in the strength of its gales, nor constant in blowing on the same part of the earth. The Holy Spirit, is a sovereign and free agent, and dispenses his favours in what measure he pleaseth, and at what seasons he will.

Those therefore that enjoy at present a large share of assistance from the Spirit of prayer, should not presume upon it that they shall always enjoy the same. Those that have in any measure lost it, should not despair of recovering it again: And those that have not yet been blessed with his influences, may humbly hope to attain them by seeking. And this naturally leads me to the following section.

SECTION IV.

DIRECTIONS TO OBTAIN AND KEEP THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

The last thing I proposed, is, to give some directions how to obtain and to keep the assistance of the Holy Spirit; and they are such as these:

I. Seek earnestly after converting grace, and faith in Jesus Christ. For *the Spirit of grace and of supplication* dwells in believers only. He may visit others as he is the Author of some spiritual gifts, but he abides only with the saints. The sons of God are so many *temples of his Holy Spirit;* 1 Cor. iii. 16. and he perfumes their souls with the sweet incense of prayer ascending up from their hearts to God who dwells in heaven. *If we are in the flesh*, that is, in an unconverted state, *we cannot please God, nor walk in the Spirit, nor pray in the Spirit;* Rom. viii. 8, 9. It is only the children of God that receive his Spirit as a Spirit of adoption; Rom. viii. 15. *Because ye are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts;* and it is by faith in Christ Jesus, that we receive this Spirit; *Gal.* iii. 14. And wheresoever he is the Spirit of all grace, he will in some measure be a Spirit of prayer too. Let all christians therefore that would maintain, and increase in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, *live much by the faith of the Son of God*, be frequent in acts of dependence upon Christ Jesus: For the Spirit is given to him *without measure*, and in all fulness; *that from his fulness we may derive every gift, and every grace;* John iii. 34. and i. 16. As in the natural so in the spiritual or mystical

body, the spirits that give life and activity to the heart and tongue, and to all the members, are derived from the head. He that lives in heaven as our intercessor and advocate, to present our addresses and petitions to the throne, will send his own Spirit down to earth, to assist us in drawing them up. Live much upon him therefore as your intercessor, and your vital head.

II. Give all diligence to acquire this gift, or holy skill, according to the directions concerning the matter, method, and manner of prayer, which have been laid down before; and be much in the practice of prayer, both in secret and with one another, that young habits may grow and be improved by exercise. The Spirit of God will come and bless the labours of the mind towards the acquiring of spiritual gifts. Timothy is commanded to *give attendance to reading, to meditation on* the things of God, and *to give himself wholly up to the work, that his profiting may appear unto all*, though he received gifts of inspiration; 1 *Tim.* iv. 13. compared with ver. 14, 15. and 2 *Tim.* i. 6. And much more should we do it who are not thus inspired. Though prophecy were a gift of immediate inspiration, yet there were of old the schools of the prophets, or the college, in which young men were trained up in the study of divine things, that they might be the better prepared to receive the Spirit of prophecy, and use and improve it better. And these were called *the sons of the prophets;* 2 Kings vi. 1. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22. St. Paul laboured and strove with his natural powers while the Spirit wrought mightily in him; *Col.* i. 29.

Do not imagine yourselves to be in danger of quenching the Spirit, by endeavouring to furnish yourselves with matter or expressions of prayer, for the Spirit of God usually works in, and by the use of means. As in the things of nature, so in the things of grace, it is a true and divine proverb; *The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath not, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat;* Prov. xiii. 4. We are to put forth our best efforts, and then hope for divine assistance; for *the Spirit of God helps together with us*, συναντιλαμβάνεται, Rom. viii. 26. As if a man should take hold of one end of a burden in order to raise it, and some mighty helper should make his labour effectual, by raising it up at the other end, and fulfilling the design. It was the encouragement which David gave his son Solomon; 1 *Chron.* xxii. 16. *Arise and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee.* While we are stirring up ourselves to obey the command of God and seek his face, we have reason to hope his Spirit will strengthen us to this obedience, and assist us in seeking. As when God commanded Ezekiel to arise and stand upon his feet, and bade him put forth his natural powers towards raising himself, *the Spirit entered into him, and set him upon his feet*, and by a divine power made him stand; *Ezek.* ii. 1, 2.

III. Pray earnestly, and pray for the promised Spirit as a Spirit of prayer. Depend not upon all your natural and acquired abilities, what glorious attainments soever you enjoy. How have some persons been shamefully disappointed when they have ventured presumptuously to make their addresses to God by the mere strength of their own wit, and memory, and confidence? What hurry and confusion of thought have they fallen into, and been incapable to proceed in the duty? *The Holy Spirit shall be given to them that ask* aright; *Luke* xi. 13. Plead the promises of Christ with faith in his name; *John* xiv. 16, 17. For he has promised, in his own name and in his Father's, to send his Holy Spirit.

IV. *Quench not the Spirit* of prayer by confining yourselves to any set forms whatsoever. Though the Spirit of God may be present, and assist in the exercise of grace, while we use forms of prayer, yet let us have a care how we stifle or restrain any holy

motions, or good desires, and heavenly affections, that are stirred up in our hearts when we pray. If we refuse to express them, because we will not vary from the form that is written down before us, we run a great risk of *grieving the Holy Spirit*, and causing him to depart from us, as he is the Spirit of grace; and we effectually hinder ourselves from his assistance in the gift of prayer. While you borrow the best aids in your devotion from those prayers that are indited by the Spirit of God in scripture, take care and quench not his further operations, by confining yourselves entirely to those words and expressions. The Holy Spirit may be quenched, even by tying yourselves to his own words: For if he had thought those words of scripture all-sufficient for all the designs and wants of his saints in prayer, he would have given some hint of it in his word; he would have required us to use those prayers always; and there would have been no further promise of the Spirit to assist us in this work; but now he has promised it, and has forbid us to quench it while we *pray without ceasing;* 1 Thess. v. 17, 18, 19.

V. Dare not to indulge yourselves in a course of spiritless worship, in a round of formality and lip services, without pious dispositions and warm devotion in your own spirits. There may be danger of this formality and coldness even in the exercise of the gift of prayer, when we are not tied to a form. And how can we think the Spirit of God will come to our assistance, if our spirits withdraw and are absent from the work? Take notice of the frame of your minds in prayer, observe the presence or absence of this divine assistant, the Holy Spirit; and since ye are bid to *pray always in the Spirit*, Eph. vi. 18. be not satisfied with any one prayer, where ye have found nothing at all of inward divine breathings towards God through the work of his own Spirit. Oh! the dismal character and temper of those souls that pass whole years of worship, and multiply duties and forms of devotion, without end and without number, and no spirit in them.

VI. Be thankful for every aid of the Spirit of God in prayer, and improve it well. Spread all the sails of your soul to improve every gale of this heavenly wind, that *blows when and where it listeth;* John iii. 8. Comply with his holy breathings and spiritual motions. Abide in prayer, when you feel your graces raised into a lively exercise; for *it is the Spirit that quickeneth;* John vi. 63. He doth not always come in a sensible manner; therefore be tenderly careful, lest you shake him off, or thrust him from the door of your hearts, especially if he be a rare visitor.

VII. Have a care of pride and self-sufficiency, when at any time you feel great enlargements of soul in prayer, and warm affections, and divine delight. Attribute not to yourselves what is due to God, lest he be provoked. The gift of prayer in a lively and flowing exercise, will be in danger of puffing up the unwary christian; but let us remember, that it is with *the humble that God will dwell;* Isaiah lvii. 15. and to the humble *he giveth more grace;* James iv. 6.

VIII. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit* in the course of your conversation in the world. *Walk according to the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*, nor make him depart grieved; *Eph.* iv. 29. Hearken to the whispers of the Spirit of God when he convinces of sin, and comply with his secret dictates when he leads to duty, especially the duty of prayer at fit times and seasons. Grieve him not by your unwatchfulness, or by wilful sins; resist him not, lest he remove; but rather seek greater degrees of his enlightening and sanctifying influences. If you thrust him utterly away from you in the

world, he will not take it well at your hands, nor vouchsafe you his presence in the closet or in the church. If you grieve him before men, he will withdraw from you when you would come near to God, and leave your souls in grief and bitterness. Deal kindly with him, therefore, when he comes to make a visit of conviction to your consciences, and to direct and incline you even to difficult and self-denying duties. Value his presence as a Spirit of knowledge and sanctification, and he will not forsake you as a Spirit of prayer. *Live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit,* and then you shall also *pray in the Spirit.* Thus have I given short and plain directions how the assistances of the Holy Spirit may be obtained, according to the encouragements of the word of God, and the experience of praying christians: For though he be a sovereign and free agent, and his communications are of pure mercy, so that we can pretend no merit; yet the Spirit of God has so far condescended, as to give promises of his own presence to those that seek it in the way prescribed. I would not finish this section without a word of advice to those from whom the Spirit of prayer is in a great measure withdrawn, in order to their recovering his wonted assistance.

I. Advice. Be deeply sensible of the greatness of your loss, mourn over his absence, and *lament after the Lord.* Recollect the times when you could pour out your whole heart before God in prayer, with a rich plenty of expressions and lively graces; compare those shining hours with the dull and dark seasons of retirement which you now complain of. Go and mourn before your God, and say, "How vigorous were all the powers of my nature heretofore in worship? How warm my love? How fervent my zeal? How overflowing was my repentance? And how joyful my thanksgivings and praises? But now what a coldness hath seized my spirit? How dry and dead is my heart, and how far off from God and heaven, even while my knees are bowed before him in secret? *How long, O Lord, how long* ere thou return again?" Have a care of being satisfied with a circle and course of duties, without the life, power, and pleasure of religion. The Spirit of God will come and revisit the mourners; *Jer.* xxxi. 20. When God *heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, he turned his face toward him with compassion.*

II. Look back and remark the steps whereby the Spirit of God withdrew himself, and search after the sins that provoked him to depart. He is not wont to go away and leave his saints except they grieve him. See if you cannot find some sensual iniquity indulged. He hates this, for he is a Spirit of purity. David might well fear, after his scandalous sin, *that God would take away his Holy Spirit from him;* Psalm li. 11. *Recollect,* if you have not rushed upon some presumptuous sin, and run counter to your own light and knowledge: This is a sure way to make him withdraw his favourable presence. *Ask your conscience,* whether you have not resisted this blessed Spirit, when he hath brought a word of conviction, or command, or reproof to your soul? Whether you have not refused to obey some holy influence, and been heedless of his kind motions in any duty or worship? This highly deserves his resentment and departure. *Reflect* whether you have not absented yourself sinfully from your closet often, or often left it, almost as soon as you came to it, from a prevailing carnality of mind, and a sinful weariness of duty; and often shuffled off the work like a tiresome task, because you fancied the world called you: It is no wonder then if the Spirit of prayer absent himself from your closet, even when the world gives you leave to go thither. And you may expect also, that if you decline secret prayer, the Spirit will not always attend you in public. *Consider* whether you have not grown proud and vain in gifts and attainments;

and thus the Holy Spirit hath been provoked to leave you to yourself, to shew you your own weakness and insufficiency, and to abase your pride. Cry earnestly to him, and beg that he would discover his own enemy, which hath given him so just offence: And when you have found it out, bring it, and slay it before the Lord. Confess the sin before him with deep humiliation and self-abasement; abhor, renounce, and abandon it for ever. Bring it to the cross of Christ for pardon, and there let it be crucified and put to death. Cry daily for strength against it from heaven, renew your engagements to be the Lord's, and to walk more watchfully before him.

III. Remember how you obtained the Spirit of prayer at first: Read over all the foregoing directions, and put them all afresh in practice. Was it by faith in Christ Jesus that the Spirit was first received? Then by renewing acts of faith in Christ seek his return; it is he who first gives, and he who restores this glorious gift. Was it in the way of labour, duty, and diligence, that you found the Spirit's first assistance? Then stir up all the powers of your soul to the same diligence in duty; and strive and labour to get near to the throne of God, with the utmost exercise of your natural abilities, depending on his secret influences, and hoping for his return. If the wind blow not, tug harder at the oar, and so make your way toward heaven. Dare not indulge a neglect of prayer, upon pretence that the Spirit is departed; for you cannot expect he should revisit you without stirring up your soul to seek him.

Was he given you more sensibly as an answer to prayer at first? Then plead earnestly with God again to restore him: If he furnish you not with matter of prayer by his special influences, *take with you words* from his own holy book, *and say to him, take away all iniquity, and return and receive me graciously;* Hosea xiv. 1—4. Plead with him his own promises made to returning backsliders; *Jer.* iii. 22. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, 31, 37. and put him in mind of the repenting prodigal in the embraces of his father. When you have found him, *hold him fast, and never let him go;* Solomon's Song iii. 4. Dare not again indulge those follies that provoked his anger and absence. Entertain his first appearances with great thankfulness and holy joy: Let him abide with you, and maintain all his sovereignty within you, and see that you abide in him in all subjection. Walk humbly *and sin no more, lest a worse thing befal you;* lest he depart again from you, and fill your spirit with fear and bondage, and make you to possess the bitter fruit of your folly; lest he give you up to months and years of darkness, and that measure of the gift of prayer you had attained should be so strangely imprisoned and bound up, that you may be hardly able to pray at all.

CHAPTER V.

A PERSUASIVE TO LEARN TO PRAY.

IT is to little purpose that the nature of prayer is explained, that so many rules are framed, and directions given to teach persons this divine skill of prayer, if they are not persuaded of the necessity and usefulness of it. I would therefore finish these institutions, by leaving some persuasive arguments on the mind of the readers, that this attainment is worth their seeking. I am not going to address myself to those persons who, through a neglect of serious religion, have risen to the insolence of scoffing at all

prayers besides public divine services and authorised forms: Nor am I now seeking to persuade those who may have some taste of serious piety, but by a superstitious and obstinate veneration of liturgies, have for ever abandoned all thoughts of learning to pray. I think there is enough in the second chapter of this treatise to convince impartial men that the gift of prayer is no enthusiastical pretence, no insignificant cant of a particular party; but a useful and necessary qualification for all men; a piece of christian skill to be attained in a rational way, by the use of proper means and the blessing of the Holy Spirit. If what I have said cannot have influence on these persons, I leave them to the further instruction and reproof of a great and venerable man, whose name I have mentioned before, a learned prelate of the established church, who speaks thus:

"For any one to satisfy himself with a form of prayer is still to remain in infancy: It is the duty of every christian to grow and increase in all the duties of christianity, gifts as well as graces. Now how can a man be said to live suitable to these rules who doth not put forth himself in some attempts and endeavours of this kind. And if it be a fault not to strive and labour after this gift, much more it is to jeer and despise it by the name of extempore prayer, and praying by the Spirit; which expressions, as they are frequently used by some men by way of reproach, are for the most part a sign of a profane heart, and such as are altogether strangers from the power and comfort of this duty." My business here is to apply myself to those who have some sense of their obligation to prayer, and of the impossibility of answering all their necessities by any set forms whatsoever, but through a coldness and indifferency in things of religion take no pains to acquire the gift, or content themselves with so slight and imperfect a degree of it, that themselves or others are not much the better. It is this sort of christians that I would stir up and awaken to diligence, in seeking so valuable an attainment. But here I would have it again observed, that the qualification I recommend doth not consist in a treasure of sublime notions, florid phrases, and gay eloquence; but merely in a competent supply of religious thoughts, which are the fit materials of prayer, and a readiness to express them in plain and proper words with a free and natural decency.

I. The first argument or persuasive I shall draw from the design and dignity of this gift. There is such a thing as correspondence with heaven, and prayer is a great part of it while we dwell on earth. Who would not be ambitious to correspond with heaven? Who would not be willing to learn to pray? This is the language wherein God hath appointed the sons of Adam, who are but worms and dust, to address the King of Glory, their Maker; and shall there be any among the sons of Adam that will not learn this language? Shall worms and dust refuse this honour and privilege? This is the speech which the sons of God use in talking with their heavenly Father; and shall not all the children know how to speak it? This is the manner and behaviour of a saint, and these the expressions of his lips, while his soul is breathing in a divine air, and stands before God. Why should not every man be acquainted with this manner of address, that he may join in practice with all the saints, and have access at all times to the greatest and the best of beings?

There are indeed some sincere christians who daily worship God, and yet they are often labouring for want of matter, and are perpetually at a loss for proper expressions; They have but a mean attainment of this holy skill; but it is neither their honour nor their interest to perform so divine a work with so many human weaknesses, and yet be atisfied with them. There are children that can but just cry after their father, and

stammer out a broken word or two, by which he can understand their meaning; but these are infants and ungrown. The father had rather see his children advancing to manhood, and entertaining themselves daily with that large and free converse with himself which he allows, and to which he graciously invites them.

Prayer is a sacred and appointed means to obtain all the blessings that we want, whether they relate to this life or the life to come; and shall we not know how to use the means God hath appointed for our own happiness? Shall so glorious a privilege lie unimproved through our own neglect? Were the business of prayer nothing else but to come and beg mercy of God, it would be the duty of every man, to know how to draw up such petitions, and present them in such a way as becomes a mortal petitioner: But prayer is a work of much larger extent. When a holy soul comes before God, he hath much more to say than merely to beg. He tells his God what a sense he hath of the divine attributes, and what high esteem he pays to his majesty, his wisdom, his power, and his mercy. He talks with him about the works of creation, and stands wrapped up in wonder. He talks about the grace and mystery of redemption, and is yet more filled with admiration and joy. He talks of all the affairs of nature, grace and glory, he speaks of his works of providence, of love and vengeance, in this and the future world. Infinite and glorious are the subjects of this holy communion between God and his saints: And shall we content ourselves with sighs and groans, and a few short wishes, and deprive our souls of so rich, so divine, so various a pleasure, for want of knowing how to furnish out such meditations, and to speak this blessed language?

How excellent and valuable is this skill of praying, in comparison of the many meaner arts and accomplishments of human nature that we labour night and day to obtain? What toil do men daily undergo for seven years together, to acquire the knowledge of a trade and business in this present life? Now the greatest part of the business between us and heaven is transacted in the way of prayer: With how much more diligence should we seek the knowledge of this heavenly commerce, than any thing that concerns us merely on earth? How many years of our short life are spent to learn the Greek, the Latin, and the French tongues, that we may hold correspondence abroad among the living nations, or converse with the writings of the dead? And shall not the language wherein we converse with heaven and the living God, be thought worth equal pains? How nicely do some persons study the art of conversation, that they may be accepted in all company, and share in the favour of men? Is not the same care due, to seek all methods of acceptance with God, that we may approve ourselves in his presence? What a high value is set upon human oratory, or the art of persuasion, whereby we are fitted to discourse, and prevail with our fellow-creatures? And is this art of divine oratory of no esteem with us, which teaches us to utter our inward breathings of soul, and plead and prevail with our Creator through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and mediation of our Lord Jesus? Oh! let the excellency and high value of this gift of prayer engage our earnestness and endeavours in proportion to its superior dignity: *Let us covet the best of gifts* with the warmest desire, and pray for it with ardent supplications; 1 *Cor.* xii. 31.

II. Another argument may be borrowed from our very character and profession as christians; some measure of the gift of prayer is of great necessity and universal use to all that are called by the name. Shall we profess to be followers of Christ, and not know how to speak to the Father? Are we commanded to *pray always*, and upon all

occasions, to be constant and fervent in it, and shall we be contented with ignorance and incapacity to obey this command? Are we invited by the warmest exhortations, and encouraged by the highest hopes to draw near to God with all our wants and our sorrows, and shall we not learn to express those wants, and pour out those sorrows before the Lord? Is there a way made for our access to the throne by the blood and intercession of Jesus Christ, and shall we not know how to form a prayer to be sent to heaven, and spread before the throne by this glorious intercession? Is his Holy Spirit promised to teach us to pray, and shall a christian be careless or unwilling to receive such divine teachings? There is not any faculty in the whole christian life that is called out into so frequent exercise as this; and it is a most unhappy thing to be always at a loss to perform the work which daily necessity requires, and daily duty demands. Will a person profess to be a scholar that cannot read? Shall any man pretend to be a minister that cannot preach? And it is but a poor pretence we make to christianity, if we are not able, at least in secret, to supply ourselves with a few meditations or expressions, to continue a little in this work of prayer.

Remember then, O christian, this is not a gift that belongs to ministers alone, nor alone to governors of families, who are under constant obligations to pray in public; though it most highly concerns them to be expert in this holy skill, that with courage and presence of mind, with honour and decency, they may discharge this part of their duty to God in their congregations and households. But this duty hath a further extent. Every man that is joined to a church of Christ should seek after an ability to help the church with his prayers; or at least, upon more private occasions to join with a few fellow-christians in seeking to God their Father. Nor are *women*, though they are forbidden *to speak in the church*, forbid to pray in their own families, nor with one another in a private chamber; and I am persuaded christians would ask one another's assistance more frequently in prayer upon special occasions, if a good gift of prayer were more commonly sought and more universally obtained. Nor would congregations in the country be dismissed, and the whole Lord's-day pass without public worship, where a minister is suddenly taken sick, if some grave and discreet christian, of good ability in prayer, would but take that part of worship upon him, together with the reading some well-composed sermon, and some useful portion of holy scripture. Doubtless this would be most acceptable to that God, who *loves the gates of* Zion, or his own public ordinances, *more than all the dwellings of* Jacob, or worship of private families; *Psalm* lxxxvii. 2.

Thus far is this gift necessary, wheresoever social prayer may be performed. But the necessity of it reaches further still: There is not a man, woman, or child, that is capable of seeking God, but is bound to exercise something of the gift of prayer. And those that never have any call from Providence, to be the mouth of others in speaking to God, are called daily to speak to God themselves. It is necessary, therefore, that every soul should be so far furnished with a knowledge of the perfections of God, as to be able to adore them distinctly; should have such an acquaintance with its own wants, as to express them particularly before God, at least in the conceptions and language of the mind; should have such an apprehension of the encouragements to pray, as to be able to plead with God for supply; and should have such an observation and remembrance of divine mercies, as to repeat some of them before God with humble thanksgivings.

III. I would pursue this persuasive by a third argument, drawn from the divine

delight, and exceeding great advantage of this gift to our own souls, and to the souls of all that join in prayer with us. Christians, have you never felt your spirits raised from a carnal and vain temper of mind, to a devout frame, by a lively prayer? Have ye not found your whole souls overspread with holy affections, and carried up to heaven with most abundant pleasure, by the pious and regular performance of him that speaks to God in worship? And when ye have been cold and indifferent to divine things, have ye not felt that heavy and listless humour expelled, by joining with the warm and lively expressions of a person skilful in this duty? How sweet a refreshment have ye found under inward burdens of mind, or outward afflictions, when in broken language you have told them to your minister, and he hath spread them before God, and that in such words as hath spoke your whole souls and your sorrows? And you have experienced a sweet serenity and calm of spirits; you have risen up from your knees with your *countenance no more sad;* and have ye not wished for the same gift yourselves, that ye might be able upon all occasions thus to address the throne of grace, and pour out all your hearts in this manner before your God? But what a sad inconvenience is it to live in such a world as this, where we are liable daily to so many new troubles and temptations, and not be able to express them to God in prayer; unless we find them written in the words of a form? And how hard is it to find any form suited to all our new wants and new sorrows?

At other times, what divine impressions of holiness have ye felt in public worship in the congregation, where this duty hath been performed with holy skill and fervency? And in that prayer you have received more solid edification than from the whole sermon. How dead have you been to all sinful temptations, and how much devoted to God? And do ye not long to be able to pray thus in your households and in your own closet? Would it not be a pleasure for men to be thus able to entertain their whole families daily? And for christians thus to entertain one another, when they meet to pray to their common God and Father? and to help one another, at this rate onward to the world of praise? When the disciples had just been witnesses of the devotion of our Lord, Luke xi. 1. *who spake as never man spake*, their hearts grew warm under the words of that blessed Worshipper, and one of them, in the name of the rest, cried out, *Lord, teach us to pray* too.

Thus a good attainment of this gift is made a happy instrument of sanctification as well as comfort, by the co-working power of the blessed Spirit. But on the other hand, hath not your painful experience sometimes taught you, that zeal and devotion hath been cooled, and almost quenched, by the vain repetitions, or weak and wandering thoughts of some fellow-christian that leads the worship? And at another time a well-framed prayer of beautiful order and language hath been rendered disagreeable by some unhappy tones and gestures, so that you have been ready to long for the conclusion, and have been weary of attendance. Who then would willingly remain ignorant of such an attainment, which is so sweet and successful an instrument to advance religion in the powers and pleasures of it in their own hearts, and the hearts of all men that are round about them?

IV. The honour of God, and the credit of religion in the world, will afford me another spring of arguments to excite you to attain this skill of prayer. The great God esteems himself dishonoured, when we do not pay him the best worship we are capable of. The work of the Lord must not be done negligently. It is highly for his honour,

that we be furnished with the best talents for his service, and that we employ them in the best manner. This discovers to the world the inward high esteem and veneration we have for our Maker: This gives him glory in the eyes of men. But to neglect utterly this gift of prayer, and to serve him daily with a few sudden thoughts, with rude and improper expressions, that never cost us any thing but the labour of our lips while we speak, this is not the way to sanctify his name among men.

There is a sinful sloth and indifference in religion, that hath tempted some men to believe that God is no curious and exact enquirer into outward things: And if they can but persuade themselves their intentions are right, they imagine, that for the substance and form of their sacrifice any thing will serve: And as though he were not *a God of order*, they address him often in confusion. Because the heart is the chief thing in divine worship, like some foolish Israelite, they are regardless what beast they offer him, so it hath but a heart. But the prophet Malachi thunders with divine indignation and jealousy against such worshippers. *Ye have brought that which was torn and lame, and the sick, should I accept this at your hand? I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful;* Mal. i. 13, 14. He upbraids us with sharp resentment, and bids us *offer it to our governor*, and asks, *if he will be pleased with it?* Now our consciences sufficiently inform us, how careful we are when we make an address to an earthly governor, to have our thoughts well ordered, and words well chosen, as well as to tender it with a loyal heart: And may not our supreme Governor in heaven expect a due care in ordering our thoughts, and choosing our words, so far at least as to answer all the designs of prayer, and so far as is consistent with the necessity of so frequent addresses to him, and our other christian duties?

The credit of religion in the world is much concerned in the honourable discharge of the duty of prayer. There is an inward beauty in divine worship, that consists in the devout temper of the worshippers, and the lively exercise of holy affections: But of this, God only is witness who sees the heart. There is also an outward beauty that arises from a decent and acceptable performance of all the parts of it that come within the notice of our fellow-creatures; that those that observe us may be forced to acknowledge the excellency of religion in our practice of it.

Where worship is performed by immediate inspiration, a natural order of things, and a becoming behaviour is required in him especially who leads the worship. This is the design of the apostle in his advice to the Corinthians; 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *Let all things be done decently and in order*, i. e. Let such a prudent conduct, such a regular and rational management in all the parts of worship be found among you, as gives a natural beauty to human actions, and will give a visible glory to the acts of religion. Where this advice is followed, if *the unlearned and unbeliever*, i. e. ignorant and profane, *come into the assembly, they will fall down and worship God, and report God is in you of a truth;* ver. 25. But if ye are guilty of disorder in speaking, and break the rules of natural light and reason in uttering your inspirations, *the unlearned and unbelievers will say ye are mad*, though your words may be the dictates of the Holy Spirit.

Much more is this applicable to our common and ordinary performance of worship. When an unskilful person speaks in prayer with a heaviness and penury of thought, with mean and improper language, with a false and offensive tone of voice, or accompanies his words with aukward motions, what slanders are thrown upon our practice: A whole party of christians is ridiculed, and the scoffer saith, we are mad. But when a minister

or master of a family, with a fluency of devout sentiments and language, offers his petitions and praises to God in the name of all that are present, and observes all the rules of natural decency in his voice and gesture, how much credit is done to our profession hereby, even in the opinion of those who have no kindness for our way of worship? And how effectually doth such a performance confute the pretended necessity of imposing forms? How gloriously doth it triumph over the slanders of the adversary, and force a conviction upon the mind, that there is something divine and heavenly among us?

I cannot represent this in a better manner than is done by an ingenious author of the last age, who being a courtier in the reigns of the two brothers, Charles and James the Second, can never lie under the suspicion of being a dissenter; and that is the late Marquis of Halifax. This noble writer, in a little book under a borrowed character, gives his own sentiments of things. He tells us that, "He is far from relishing the impertinent wanderings of those, who pour out long prayers upon the congregation, and all from their own stock; a barren soil, which produces weeds instead of flowers; and by this means they expose religion itself, rather than promote men's devotions. On the other side, there may be too great restraint put upon men, whom God and nature have distinguished from their fellow-labourers, by blessing them with a happier talent, and by giving them not only good sense, but a powerful utterance too, has enabled them to gush out upon the attentive auditory with a mighty stream of devout and unaffected eloquence. When a man so qualified, endued with learning too, and above all, adorned with a good life, breaks out into a warm and well-delivered prayer before his sermon, it has the appearance of a divine rapture; he raises and leads the hearts of his assembly in another manner than the most composed or best studied form of set words can ever do: And the pray we's, who serve up all their sermons with the same garnishing, would look like so many statues, or men of straw in the pulpit, compared with those that speak with such a powerful zeal, that men are tempted at the moment to believe heaven itself has dictated their words to them."

V. A fifth persuasive to seek the gift of prayer, shall be drawn from the easiness of attaining it, with the common assistance of the Holy Spirit. Easy I call it, in comparison of the long toil and difficulty that men go through, in order to acquire a common knowledge in arts, sciences, or trades in this world; though it is not to be expected without some pains and diligence. Some young persons may be so foolish and unhappy, as to make two or three bold attempts to pray in company, before they have well learned to pray in secret; and finding themselves much at a loss and bewildered in their thoughts, or confounded for want of presence of mind, they have abandoned all hopes, and contented themselves with saying, it is impossible: And as they have tempted God, by rashly venturing upon such an act of worship without any due care and preparation, so they have afterward thrown the blame of their own sloth upon God himself, and cried, it is a mere gift of heaven, but God hath not bestowed it upon me. This is as if a youth who had just begun to read logic, should attempt immediately to dispute in a public school, and finding himself baffled and confounded, should cast away his book, renounce his studies, and say, I shall never learn it, it is impossible. Whereas when we seek any attainment, we must begin regularly, and go on gradually toward perfection with patience and labour: Let but the rules recommended in the second chapter of this treatise, for acquiring the gift of prayer, be duly followed, and I doubt not but

a christian of ordinary capacity may in time gain so much of this skill, as to answer the demands of his duty and his station.

Rather than I would be utterly destitute of this gift of prayer, I would make such an experiment as this. Once a month I would draw up a new prayer for myself in writing, for morning and evening, and for the Lord's-day, according to all parts of this duty described in the first chapter of this book, or out of the scriptures that Mr. Henry hath collected in his method of prayer, which book I would recommend to all christians. I would use it constantly all that month, yet never confining myself all along to those very same words, but giving myself a liberty to put in or leave out, or enlarge according to the present workings of my heart, or occurrences of Providence. Thus by degrees I would write less and less, at last setting down little more than heads or hints of thought or expression; just as ministers learn by degrees to leave off their sermon notes in preaching. I would try whether a year or two of this practice would not furnish me with an ability in some measure to pray without this help; always making it one of my petitions that God would pour more of his Spirit upon me, and teach me the skill of praying. And by such short abstracts and general heads of prayer, well drawn up for children, according to their years and knowledge, they may be taught to pray by degrees, and begin before they are six years old.

Objection. If any christian that loves his ease should abuse this proposal, and say, "If I may use this prayer of my own framing for a month together, why may I not use it all my life, and so give myself no further trouble about learning to pray?"

Answer 1. I would first desire such a man to read over again the great inconveniences mentioned in the second chapter, that arise from a perpetual use of forms, and the danger of confinement to them. 2. I would say in the second place, The matter of prayer is almost infinite: It extends to every thing we can have to transact with our Maker, and it is impossible, in a few pages, to mention particularly one-tenth part of the subjects of our converse with God. But in drawing up new prayers every month, in time we may run through a great part of those subjects, and grow by degrees to be habitually furnished for converse with him on all occasions whatsoever: Which can never be done by dwelling always upon one form or two. As children that learn to read at school, daily take out new lessons, that they may be able at last to read every thing, which they would not well attain, if they always dwelt on the same lesson. 3. Besides, there is a blessed variety of expressions in scripture, to represent our wants, and sorrows, and dangers: The glory, power, and grace of God, his promises and covenants, our hopes and discouragements; and sometimes one expression, sometimes another, may best suit our present turn of thought and temper of our minds. It is good, therefore, to have as large a furniture of this kind as possible, that we might never be at a loss to express the inward sentiments of our soul, and clothe our desires and wishes in such words as are most exactly fitted to them. 4. Though God is not the more affected with variety of words and arguments in prayer, for he acts upon other principles borrowed from himself, yet our natures are more affected with such a variety. Our graces are drawn into more vigorous exercise, and by our importunity in pleading with God with many arguments, we put ourselves more directly under the promise that is made to importunate petitioners; and we become fitter to receive the mercies we seek.

Yet in the last place, I would answer by way of concession: If we have the scheme and substance of several prayers ready composed, and well suited to all the most usual

cases and concerns of life and religion, and if one or other of these be daily used with seriousness, interposing new expressions wherever the soul is drawn out to further breathings after God, or where it finds occasion for new matter from some present providences: This is much rather to be approved than a neglect of all prayer, or a dwelling upon a single form or two; and it will be more edifying to those who join with us, than a perpetual confusion of thought, and endless dishonourable attempts in the mere extemporary way.

But I speak this by way of indulgence to persons of weaker gifts, or when the natural spirits are low, or the mind much indisposed for duty: And in these cases the way of addressing God, which is called mixed prayer, will be so far from confining the pious soul to a dead form of worship, that it will sometimes prove a sweet enlargement and release to the spirit under its own darkness and confinement. It will furnish it with spiritual matter, and awaken it to a longer and more lively converse with God in its own language: And, if I may use a plain comparison, it will be like pouring a little water into a pump, whereby a much greater quantity will be raised from the spring when it lies low in the earth.

Objection. If any christian, on the other hand, should forbid all use of such compositions, as supposing them utterly unlawful, and quenching the Spirit:

Answer. I would humbly reply, there is no danger of that, while we do not rest in them, as our designed end, but use them only as means to help us to pray, and never once confine ourselves to them without liberty of alteration. It is the saying of a great divine, "Though set forms made by others, be as a crutch or help of our insufficiency, yet those which we compose ourselves, are a fruit of our sufficiency: And that a man ought not to be so confined by any premeditated form, as to neglect any special infusion; he should so prepare himself, as if he expected no assistance: And he should so depend upon divine assistance, as if he had made no preparation."

Here, if I might obtain leave of my fathers in the ministry, I would say this to younger students: That if in their private years of study, they pursued such a course once a week, as I have here described, I am persuaded their gifts would be richly improved; their ministerial labours would be more universally acceptable to the world; their talents would be attractive of multitudes to their place of worship; the hearers would be raised in their spirits, while the preacher prays with a regular and divine eloquence; and they would receive those sermons with double influence and success, which are attended with such prayers.

VI. The last attempt I shall make to convince christians of the necessity of seeking this gift, shall be merely by representing the ill consequences of the neglect of it. If you take no pains to learn to pray, you will unavoidably fall into one of these three evils: Either, first, you will drag on heavily in the work of prayer all your days, even in your closets as well as your family, and be liable to so many imperfections in the performance, as will rob your own soul of a great part of the benefit and the delight of this sweet duty, and give neither pleasure nor profit to them that hear you: The ignorant part of your household will sleep under you, while the more knowing are in pain for you. And perhaps you will sometimes think to make amends for the dulness of the devotion, by encreasing the length of it: But this is to add one error to another, and lay more burdens upon them that are weary.

Or secondly, If you find that you cannot carry on the constancy of this duty with tolerable satisfaction, you will give yourself up to a morning and evening form, and rest in them from year to year. Now though it may be possible for some persons to use a form without deadness and formality of spirit, yet such as from a mere principle of sloth, neglect to learn to pray, are most likely to fall into formality and slothfulness in the use of forms, and the power of religion will be lost.

Or, in the last place, if you have been bred up with a universal hatred of all forms of prayer, and yet know not how to pray without them, you will grow first inconstant in the discharge of this duty; every little hindrance will put you by; and at last perhaps you will leave it off entirely, and your house and your closet too in time will be without prayer. Christians, which of these three evils will ye choose? Can ye be satisfied to drudge on to your life's end, among improprieties and indecencies; and thus expose prayer to contempt? Or will your minds be easy to be confined for ever to a form or two of slothful devotion? Or shall prayer be banished out of your houses, and all appearance of religion be lost among you? Parents, which of these evils do ye choose for your children? You charge them to pray daily, you tell them the sin and danger of dwelling all upon prayer-books, and yet you scarce ever give them any regular instructions how to perform this duty. How can ye expect they should maintain religion honourably in their families, and avoid the things you forbid? But whatsoever ill consequences attend them hereafter, consider what share of the guilt will lie at the door of those who never took any pains to shew them to pray.

While I am persuading christians with so much earnestness to seek the gift of prayer, surely none will be so weak as to imagine the grace and spirit of prayer may be neglected. Without some degrees of common influence from the blessed Spirit, the gift is not to be attained. And without the exercise of grace in this duty, the prayer will never reach heaven, nor prevail with God. He is not taken with the brightest forms of worship, if the heart be not there. Be the thoughts never so divine, the expressions never so sprightly, and delivered with all the sweet and moving accents of speech, it is all in his esteem but a fair carcase without a soul: It is a mere picture of prayer, a dead picture which cannot charm; a lifeless offering, which the living God will never accept; nor will our great High-Priest ever present it to the Father.

But these things do not fall directly under my present design. I would therefore recommend my readers to those treatises that enforce the necessity of spiritual worship, and describe the glory of inward devotion above the best outward performances. Then shall they learn the perfection of beauty in this part of worship, when the gift and grace of prayer are happily joined in the secret pleasure and success of it, and appear before men in its full loveliness and attractive power. Then shall religion look like itself, divine and heavenly, and shine in all the lustre it is capable of here upon earth.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

WAY OF INSTRUCTION BY CATECHISMS,

AND OF THE

BEST MANNER OF COMPOSING THEM.

DEDICATION.

TO THE

PARENTS AND GOVERNORS OF FAMILIES

BELONGING TO THE

Congregation which usually assemble for Worship in Berry-Street, London.

Christian Friends, beloved in our Lord,

SINCE you make a solemn profession of the religion of Christ, and build your hopes of a happy eternity upon it, I am well persuaded it is the desire of your souls that your families should be trained up in the practice of the same religion, and become heirs of eternal happiness together with yourselves. For this end you engage their attendance on public worship; but your ministers have little hope of obtaining this end by all their public labours, unless you join to assist them with your private instructions and prayers. Even when we address our discourses to the young, we can do it but in general language; but you have some special advantages with regard to those of your own house: There are many opportunities which you may seize to promote this pious work; many tender moments of address wherein you may apply yourselves in a more particular manner to the understandings and to the consciences of your children, in order to fix the great doctrines and duties of christianity upon their memory and their heart.

I need not inform you, for you are well apprized of this great truth, that the foundation of all religion is laid in knowledge. We must not worship an unknown God, nor pay him service without understanding. I presume therefore that you take due care and pains to instruct your children in their early years in the chief principles of our holy religion, and I would hope that while you make them learn that full and comprehensive form of instruction called the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, you endeavour to inform them of the meaning of every sentence, that they may not learn words by rote without knowing what they mean.

And yet I beg leave to enquire of you, my friends, after all your labours, whether you can find that your children take in the sense of those questions and answers in the years of infancy and childhood, when you impress the words upon their memory? Do they pronounce the answers in such a manner as though they understood the meaning of them? May I be permitted yet further to enquire concerning yourselves when you learned this catechism in your younger years? Did you understand all those sentences

and expressions, when perhaps you could readily repeat them by heart? I am persuaded you have made some observations upon your own experience, both in learning and in teaching the things of God: Surely you are convinced it is far better that children should be instructed in the important principles of their duty and happiness, in such a way, as may lead them to understand the words which they learn to pronounce. Have not many of you often wished for some easier and shorter forms of knowledge, whereby your children might have some sense of divine things, and early religion let into their minds in a way more suited to their feeble capacities.

Far be it from me to take out of your hands that valuable catechism of the assembly of divines: I am not going to persuade you to lay aside the use of it in your families; but only to render the work of instructing your children and servants more easy and more successful. I would fain propose to you a method whereby children who cannot understand the answers of that catechism, may yet have their tender minds furnished and impressed with the things of God and their salvation betimes, and that they may be better prepared for using that catechism with greater advantage when they are further advanced in age and knowledge, and when their minds are better fitted to receive the deeper sense therein contained. This is what a multitude of private christians have desired, and that not only for the use of their children, but of their servants also, and for the first instruction of any of the more ignorant parts of mankind. This is what many ministers have attempted even since the Assembly's Catechism was written: This is what I have been often solicited to undertake these twenty years by several ministers and private christians: And this, my friends, is the business and design of the little book which I here present you. Though I will not pretend or presume to write catechisms for the world, yet I think I do not extend my studies and cares beyond my proper province, when I take pains to assist you in the instruction of your families. If any other christian families think proper to make use of these plain forms of instruction, I heartily wish they may find all the desired success.

If it should be enquired how I came to set about this work now, after so long solicitations and delays, I will tell you freely, that while I was writing the Treatise of Education which I promised the world some time ago, I found this work of catechising came in necessarily as a part of it: And finding it grow too large for a chapter in that treatise, I separated it from the rest, and have thus prepared it to be published by itself before the other is finished. I believe you will heartily agree to do me so much justice, as not to impute this work to any principle of ambition, or to suppose that a vain design of glory amongst men has tempted me to frame an A B C for children. I well know that some of my particular friends imagine my time is employed in too mean a service while I write for babes: I own my obligations to them for their good opinion of any of my other writings: But I content myself with this thought, that nothing is too mean for a servant of Christ to engage in, if he can thereby most effectually promote the kingdom of his blessed Master. If the God whom I serve will bless my labours to sow the seeds of religion in the understandings and hearts of children, I shall hope there will

arise a fair harvest of the fruits of holiness in the succeeding generation, and some revenue of glory to my Creator and Redeemer.

Perhaps it is not proper for me to say, and the world will hardly believe, what pains have been taken in composing these catechisms, especially the first and second of them; with what care I have endeavoured to select the most easy and necessary parts of our religion, in order to propose them to the memory of children according to their ages; what laborious diligence has been used to seek out all the plainest and most familiar forms of speech, that the great things of God and the mysteries of the gospel might be brought down to the capacities of children. It is not for me to say how many hours, and days, and weeks, have been spent in reviewing and examining every word and expression, that, if possible, nothing might be inserted which might give just occasion of offence to pious persons and families, that nothing might be left out which was necessary for children to know in that tender age; and that no word, phrase, or sentiment, if possible, might be admitted which could not be brought in some measure within the reach of a child's understanding.

I am well aware that both my younger catechisms will be thought defective, in that I have not therein warned children more particularly of some sins of which they are in continual danger. But I was much afraid to make these early forms of instruction too burdensome and tedious. Besides, whatsoever is wanting either of the mention of duties or of sins relating to God or man, may be found in the explication of the ten commandments in the Assembly's Catechism, or in my Preservative from the Sins and Follies of Childhood and Youth; and I have recommended both these to be read frequently, even while children are learning the foregoing catechisms by heart.

There is another defect, of which some will complain; and that is, there is not enough of the historical part of our religion brought into the two catechisms of the principles of religion, which I have written for children; at least the history of Adam and of the Jews, and the history of Christ, should have had a much larger share therein. But I desire my friends to consider, that at the same time while these catechisms are learning, there are catechisms of scripture-history proposed also to be gotten by heart, according to the different ages of children, wherein the narratives relating both to the first and second Adam, and to the Jews, are much larger; and I think this will fully relieve that supposed inconvenience or defect; for there was no need of repeating these historical transactions in both places; and if I had added more of the sacred history to the catechisms of the principles of religion, it would have made them appear too long and tedious. But that you may be more fully acquainted with the reasons of this attempt, and that you may know the method I have observed, and the care I have taken in these composures, I entreat you to read over the following discourse of the excellency and use of catechisms, and of the natural and most useful manner of composing them.

When you have diligently, and without prejudice, perused that short essay, I am persuaded you will agree with me, at least in this general opinion, that something more

than hath been done in times past, ought to be attempted, in order to render the momentous concerns of religion more intelligible to children, and that these my labours are not utterly unsuited to that design.

Yet after all, I commit these papers to your candour, as well as to your judgment and your practical use; and while you labour in this most necessary work, the instructing of your families in the doctrines and duties of christianity, let your daily fervent prayers accompany your private instructions, that the heart may be enriched with every divine grace, while the head is furnished with useful knowledge. And may the Spirit of light and grace descend on all the younger branches of your household, and visit every menial servant there, that your families may be as temples wherein God may dwell, with all the train of blessings which relate to this life and the life to come.

While my want of a strong constitution of body, and my necessary retirements from the city, render me incapable of paying so many visits to your families, and promoting their spiritual welfare so much as I would gladly do, I humbly hope this little book may be attended with the divine blessing; that your children may derive from it abundant benefit; that the principles of piety and goodness being early instilled into their minds, they may be better secured against the temptations of infidelity, vice, and profaneness; that they may stand up in the following age as the supports and ornaments of true religion; and bear up the name of Christ with honour in a degenerate and sinful world; this is the hearty prayer of

Your devoted and affectionate
Servant in the gospel,

I. WATTS.

Theobalds in Hertfordshire,
February 14, 1729—30.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

WAY OF INSTRUCTION BY CATECHISMS,

AND OF

THE BEST METHOD OF COMPOSING THEM.

SECTION I.

THE DUTY OF INSTRUCTING CHILDREN IN RELIGION.

CHILDREN have souls as well as men: They soon discover their capacity of reasoning, and make it appear they can learn the things of God and religion. The great God therefore expects that little children should be taught to know, and love, and worship him; for he hath not bestowed their early powers in vain. Their souls also in their own nature are immortal; and thousands of them are summoned away from this world by death. *The righteous Judge of the world* will call *the small as well as the great* to his bar of account. All those whom he shall esteem capable of duty and sinning must be answerable for their own personal conduct; and how early he will begin to require this account he only knows. Parents therefore cannot well begin too soon to let children know that they have souls that must live when their bodies are dead; they should instruct them, there is a future judgment, and an account to be given of their behaviour in this life, as soon as they have well learned there is a God, and what duties he requires of them.

I am by no means of their opinion who let children grow up almost to the age of manhood before their minds are informed of the principles of religion. Their pretence is, that the choice of religion ought to be perfectly free, and not biassed and influenced by the authority of parents, or the power of education. But surely the great God, who framed the soul of man, hath made it capable of learning religion and the knowledge of God, by the instruction of others in the years of childhood, long before it is capable of tracing out the knowledge of God and religion by its own reasoning powers; and why should not parents follow the order of God and nature; why should they not instruct children in the knowledge, and love, and fear of God, as soon as they are capable of these divine lessons, and not leave them to grow up to their full bulk and size, like the offspring of brute animals, without God and without knowledge?

Besides, doth not the very light of nature teach us that parents are entrusted with the care of their children in younger years, to furnish their minds with the seeds of virtue and happiness, as well as to provide for their bodies food and raiment? Are parents bound to take care of *the flesh that perishes*, and yet left at a loose, and unconcerned to

take any care of immortal spirits? Must they be afraid to teach their children the best way they know to *everlasting life*, for fear lest they should believe and practise it before their reason is ripe enough to choose a religion for themselves? Will they let them trifle away their childhood and youth without the knowledge and love of God, for fear they should learn it too soon, or lest they should build their faith and practice too much upon the superior age, character, aud authority of their parents?

But let us enquire a little, What was this superior age and knowledge, this superior character and authority of parents designed for, if not for the care, instruction and government of their tender and ignorant offspring? And can we imagine this paternal authority, instruction, and government, should reach to every other part of the child's conduct, and exclude his religion? Must the parent give him the best instructions he can in the affairs of this perishing life, and refuse or neglect it in the things of everlasting moment and divine importance? Is it not infinitely better that children should know and serve God, because their parents teach them to do it, than that they should be utterly ignorant of God, and live in a stupid neglect of him and his service. Can a religious parent satisfy himself with this philosophical pretence of not biassing the judgment of his children, and let them go on, and die before they arrive at manhood, in a state of shameful ignorance and rebellion against their Maker? Are children entrusted to the affection and care of parents by the God of nature, for so deplorable an end as this? And will the life and soul of the child never *be required* at the parent's hand?

There may be many hours and seasons of life when parents may give notice to their children as they grow up to maturity, that religion ought to be a matter of their rational choice. They may be taught to examine the principles they received from their education, and to settle their faith and practice upon solid grounds. But in the mean time children ought to have some notices of the great God who made them instilled into their minds from their very infancy. They ought to be led into that religion in which their parents hope to obtain acceptance with God, and happiness in the world to come. This is the universal voice of nature, and it reclaims aloud against those humorous, slothful, or cruel parents, who bring their children into a dangerous world, and into a state of existence which has no end; and yet take no care to inform them how to escape the dangers of this world, nor how to seek the happiness of their endless existence.

This is the solemn appointment of heaven by express revelation. The command of Moses, the divine lawgiver, the Proverbs of Solomon, the wisest of men, and the sacred epistles of St. Paul, the greatest of the apostles, all concur and repeat this advice, *To teach the words of God to children diligently, to train up children in the way they should go, and to educate them in the nurture and admonition of the true religion.* See Deut. vi. 6, 7. Prov. xxii. 6. Eph. vi. 4. And surely if parents had but that just share of tenderness and affection for their young sons and their daughters that nature requires, or that scripture enjoins; if they did but look upon them as little parts of themselves, they could not forbear to acquaint them with the things that belong to their everlasting welfare. I might add this also as a final consideration, That if parents take no care to inform their children of the duty they owe to God, they will quickly find that children will pay very little duty to their parents; and they will read their own crime of shameful negligence toward God, in the rebellion of their offspring against themselves.

SECTION II.

OF INSTRUCTING CHILDREN, PARTLY BY REASON, AND PARTLY BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE PARENT.

But I will suppose parents are convinced of their duty to their children in this respect, though some doubts may remain whether they should begin this work of instruction from their very infancy. Now I know no reason why this blessing should be withheld from children when they are first capable of receiving it. As soon as the young creatures begin to make it appear that they have understandings, and have learned the use of words, they may lay out the early exercises of reason in the things of religion. Children of ordinary capacity, at three years old, or a little more, may be taught to know that the heavens and the earth, and the birds, and the beasts, and the trees, and men and women, did not make themselves; but that there is some Almighty Being that made them all, though they cannot see him with their eyes: And they may be instructed in a way of easy reasoning in some of the most evident and most necessary duties which they owe to the great God, whom they see not, almost as soon as they are taught the duties of love and obedience to their parents whom they see daily. By little and little they may be informed and made to see that they are *sinful creatures*, that they have offended the great God that made them, that they cannot save themselves from his anger; and thus they may be led to some acquaintance with *Jesus Christ the only Saviour*.

It is certain that we ought to teach children and ignorant persons the knowledge of religion in a rational way, as far as they are capable of receiving it; though I confess it is not an easy matter to make them understand the grounds and reasons of every part of that religion which they may be taught to believe and practise. There are some things therefore that in these younger years of life a child must take entirely upon the credit and authority of the parent or master, such as, *the immortality of the soul, the future state of rewards and punishments*, and *the truth of the christian religion*. The Bible is the sacred book which contains the religion of christians; but it is impossible to lead young children into those arguments whereby we prove the authority of the Bible. This therefore must be taken upon trust, and the child's faith of it must be built upon the testimony of his parents and teachers till he is capable of examining these things for himself.

SECTION III.

SHORT SUMMARIES OF RELIGION ARE NECESSARY FOR THE IGNORANT.

Nor yet is it enough to teach children to read, and then to put the Bible in their hands, and to tell them, *Here lies your religion, and you must find it out as well as you can*. The great God who has ordained the holy scriptures to be the perfect rule of our faith and practice, and sufficient of itself without the help of human traditions, hath also appointed that in all the successive ages of mankind there should be some teachers and instructors of others, to point out to them what use is to be made of these sacred volumes. Parents, by the laws of nature and scripture, are vested with this office: They must teach children how to draw their religion out of the Bible, and render the

knowledge of divine things more easy, by shewing them how to distinguish the most useful parts of scripture from the rest, and which are the most necessary doctrines and duties of religion, as they are derived from the word of God. Without such helps as these, the more ignorant and illiterate part of mankind might turn over the leaves of their Bible a long time, before they could collect for themselves any tolerable scheme of their duty to God, or their fellow-creatures. I knew a person, who falling under sensible convictions of her want of religion and piety toward God, and having been told that the Bible was the book whence she was to learn her duty, reasoned thus with herself; *Where shall I find the beginning of my duty to God, but in the beginning of this book?* And so she betook herself to read several of the first chapters of *Genesis.* She laboured and wearied herself in that search with very small advantage, till by the information of other christians, and attendance on the ministry of the word, she was led into the knowledge of the chief principles of the christian religion, which are scattered up and down in several parts of the word of God.

We must consider that the Bible is a large book, and it contains the history of mankind, and particularly of the church of God from the beginning of the world. Herein are recorded the several discoveries of the mind and will of God in every age, according to the necessities and occasions of men. Some of these rules of duty, which were given to the church of God in ancient ages, are now antiquated and abolished; such are the sacrifices and ceremonies of the patriarchal religion from Adam to Moses, and the more numerous rites of the levitical law. Many of the doctrines and duties of piety are also intermingled so much with the historical and prophetical writings, that an unlearned and ignorant person needs some kind hand to point out those places where these important truths and duties lie; and such a friendly hand would still give greater assistance to the ignorant enquirer, by gathering together in one view, and in proper order, the more considerable and necessary articles of faith and practice, as they lie promiscuously scattered abroad in this large volume of the scriptures.

This is the great design of the bodies of divinity and systems which have been drawn up in larger or lesser forms by learned men in several ages; nor is it any derogation from the honour of scripture, when we propose these systems for the instruction of those who are ignorant; for we own all their authority to be derived from the word of God. I know not how to set this matter in a more agreeable light, than the late Rev. Mr. Matthew Henry has done in a sermon of his, preached almost twenty years ago. "Bear us witness," saith he, "we set up no other rule of faith and practice, no other oracle, no other touchstone or test of orthodoxy, but the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament; these only are the fountains whence we fetch our knowledge; these only the foundations on which we build our faith and hope; these the dernier resort of all our enquiries and appeals in the things of God, for they only are given by divine inspiration. Every other help we have for our souls, we make use of in subordination and subserviency to the scripture, and among the rest our catechisms and confessions of faith. Give me leave," saith he, "to illustrate this by an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe; they know very well that the common law of England lies in the year book, and books of reports, in the records of immemorial customs, and in cases occasionally adjudged, which are not an artificial system drawn up by the rules of method, but rather historical collections of what was solemnly discussed and judiciously delivered in several reigns, *pro re natâ*, and always taken for law, and according to which the practice has

always been. Now such are the books of the scripture, histories of the several ages of the church, as those of the several reigns of the kings, and of the discoveries of God's mind and will in every age, as there was occasion; and these too are built upon ancient principles, received and submitted to before these divine annals began to be written.

"But though those are the fountains and foundations of the law, those gentlemen know that institutes and abridgments, collections of and references to the cases adjudged in the books, are of great use to them, to prepare them for the study of the originals, and to assist them in the application of them; but they are not thought to derogate from the authority and honour of them; such we reckon our forms of sound words to be. If in any thing they mistake the sense of the text, or misapply it, they must be corrected by it; but as far as they agree with it, they are of great use to make it more easy and ready to us. That which is intended in these forms of sound words, is not like the council of Trent, to make a new creed, and add to it what we have in the scripture, but to collect and methodize the truths and laws of God, and to make them familiar." Thus this pious writer makes it appear, that there are three valuable ends attained by framing such comprehensive systems of religion out of the word of God.

"1. Hereby," saith he, "the main principles of christianity, which lie scattered in the scripture, are collected and brought together; and by this means they are set in a much easier view before the minds of men. Our catechisms and confessions of faith pick up from the several parts of holy writ those passages, which though perhaps occasionally delivered, contain the essentials of religion, the foundations and main pillars upon which christianity is built, which we are concerned rightly to understand, and firmly to believe in the first place, and then to go on to perfection.

"2. Hereby the truths of God, the several articles of christian doctrine and duty, are methodized and put in order. It is true, the books of scripture are written in an excellent method, according to the particular nature and intention of them; but when the design is to represent the main principles of religion in one view, it is necessary that they be put into another method proper to serve that design, that we may understand them the more distinctly, by observing their mutual references to each other, their connexion with and dependence upon each other, and thereby they appear in their truer light and fuller lustre.

"3. Hereby the truths of God are brought down to the capacity of those who are as yet but weak in understanding."

In all this account of things, this worthy author has spoken so much of my sentiments, that I chose to set before the reader, in his own words, the several advantages of drawing up such little schemes of the principles of christianity.

SECTION IV.

CATECHISMS ARE THE BEST SUMMARIES OF RELIGION FOR CHILDREN.

Now among the various forms and methods, wherein the prime articles of our religion have been put together in a comprehensive scheme for the use of the unlearned, there is none so proper for children as that of catechisms. The way of instruction by question and answer, seems to be the plainest and easiest manner wherein the knowledge of religion

can be conveyed to the minds of those that are ignorant, and especially of the younger parts of mankind. This will appear in several respects.

1. Hereby the principles of christianity are reduced into short sentences, which are much more easy to be understood by children, as well as to be treasured up in their memories.

2. Hereby these divine principles are not only thrown into a just and easy method, but every part of them is naturally introduced by a proper question, and the rehearsal of the answer, which should never exceed three or four lines, is made far easier to a child, than it would be if the child were required to repeat the whole scheme of religion by heart without the interposition of another speaker.

3. This way of teaching hath something familiar and delightful in it, because it looks more like conversation and dialogue. It keeps the attention fixed with pleasure on the sacred subject, and yet continually relieves the attention by the alternate returns of the question and answer.

4. The very curiosity of the young mind is awakened by the question to know what the answer will be, and the child will take pleasure in learning the answer by heart, to improve its own knowledge, and to be able to answer such a question. And thus the principles of religion will gradually slide into the mind, and the whole scheme of it be learned without fatigue and tiresomeness.

I might have enlarged greatly upon each of these advantages which the catechetical method has for the instruction of children above and beyond all others. I profess myself therefore a constant friend to catechisms for the instruction of the ignorant.

SECTION V.

OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY LEARN BY HEART, AND OF THE USE OF DIFFERENT CATECHISMS FOR DIFFERENT AGES.

The great question that now remains is this, What sort of catechisms are most proper for the use of children? The answer is very natural, and ever at hand: Surely such catechisms must be best which they can best understand, supposing that all the articles of religion necessary for children are contained in them. The business and duty of the teacher is not merely to teach them words, but things. Words written on the memory without ideas, or sense in the mind, will never incline a child to his duty, nor save his soul. The young creature will neither be the wiser nor the better for being able to repeat accurate definitions and theorems in divinity, without knowing what they mean. Suppose a grown person, who knows no language but English, should get by heart the divinest doctrines, or most perfect rules of duty in French or Hebrew, what profit would he find by all this labour of his memory? Wisdom and goodness does not consist in such fatigues of the brain, and such a treasure of unknown words.

It is not enough to say, "This is the most complete system of divinity, this is the most perfect compendium of sacred truth, and therefore let the child be required to learn it." Whereas the child would learn sacred truths sooner and better by a less perfect system, which might contain only the A B C of religion to be instilled by degrees, than by having his little soul overwhelmed at once with a full and accurate discourse on the deeper points of christianity. Surely catechisms of religion for the instruction of

children ought to be so framed as to let the beams of divine light into their minds by degrees as they can receive it, that the young scholars might have some understanding of every thing which they are obliged to learn by heart. Why should not religion be taught in this respect in the same gradual way as we teach other parts of learning or knowledge?

When a child learns to read, do we not first teach him to know the letters, and then to join syllables and words? After this, some short and easy lessons are appointed him; and then some that are longer and more difficult: But we never put a young child to read the most perfect and the hardest lessons at first coming to school. So if we instruct a lad in any science, whether grammar, logic, or natural philosophy, we teach him first the most obvious and easy principles, and give him a short and general view of that science, and thus prepare him to receive the more difficult and more complicated parts of it: Now why should we not practise after the same manner when we instruct children in the great and important things of religion? Why should religion of all things be taught in such a way as is least suited to make the learner understand it? And indeed how can the knowledge of God and our duty be taught at all in such a way as will let us know little of our duty, or our God, even while we learn to speak much about him.

It is certain, that at the age of three or four years old, a child may be taught to know something more than mere words and terms; he may attain such ideas both of the God that made him, and of his duty to his Maker, as is necessary for his share of practice in that infant state: And yet it is impossible that he should then take in the deep and sublime and controverted points of faith. At seven or eight years of age he can receive more of the truths and duties of christianity than he could at four: And the same remark may be repeated concerning a child of ten or twelve years old, and concerning a youth of fourteen or fifteen. Now would it not be of admirable advantage if we had different catechisms for children and youth, and lessons of religion more or less easy, in proportion to their different ages? Is it not a most desirable thing to have shorter and longer summaries of christianity drawn up in various forms, answerable to the tender capacities of children, and the continual growth of their understandings? Did not the reverend assembly of divines at Westminster mean the same thing when besides their confession of faith, they agreed upon a larger catechism for grown persons, and a shorter catechism for those who are younger or more ignorant? It is plain they had such sort of sentiments as these, and something of this kind in view by setting forth two catechisms, a longer and a shorter.

Now if there were a series of such successive catechisms drawn up in a shorter and easier form than that of the assembly, and the truths expressed in a more condescending manner, it would be of unspeakable advantage toward the instilling the early knowledge of religion into mankind, even from their very infancy. Then parents would not be under an unhappy necessity of teaching children the greatest and deepest things of christianity in their infant age, before they can possibly know the meaning of them. Then children need not have such a long train of theological phrases and hard sentences imposed on their memories, while by reason of their infancy they understand very little more of them than a parrot, and talk them over almost by mechanism.

SECTION VI.

OF COMPOSING ANY OTHER CATECHISMS BESIDES THAT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES.

Objection. But why should you pretend to write one or more catechisms after that admirable form of sound words appointed by those great men in the assembly of divines at Westminster?

Answer I. The plainest and most obvious reasons for composing shorter and easier catechisms for young children, are, because that of the assembly of divines contains one hundred and seven questions and answers, and is therefore much too heavy a task for their memory: Some of these answers also are formed into too long connected sentences for the minds of children to comprehend or to remember: And there is much of the sense, as well as the style and language of it, too hard for children to understand.* These reasons are so evident to all men, that there is no need to enlarge upon them. Experience has taught this inconvenience to every family who hath tried it.

Let me only point at the cause how it came to pass that this catechism is so long and so difficult. It is well known that the Assembly's Larger Catechism was not composed for children, but for men, to give them a large and full view of all the parts of our holy religion. There are therefore many deep and difficult points of doctrine contained in it, and that in those phrases and forms of speech which are chosen with much learned accuracy by divines skilful in theological controversies; and it must be confessed, that in such a complete and accurate scheme many ideas and many phrases will be far above the reach of any young child in the world. Now the Shorter Catechism is but an abridgment of the larger, and was made partly with the same design of fulness and accuracy; and it must be acknowledged it is a very judicious abridgment. It is said to be collected or drawn up by a committee of divines, and approved by the assembly at Westminster; and it is expressed in many of the same phrases as the larger. The composition of it doth not seem to condescend quite enough to the weak understandings of children, either in the choice of the plainest sentiments, which are most needful for children, or the most easy and familiar language; a multitude of the same latinized and theological terms are used in it as in the larger: The chief advantage of it for learners is this, that it is more easy for the memory, because it is shorter than the other.

If this be well considered, the name or character of that venerable assembly who composed the larger catechism for men, and appointed the shorter as an excellent abridgment of it for the use of the more ignorant, can never suffer any affront by having still an easier form of words drawn up for the instruction of young children in the principles of christianity, to prepare them for the better understanding and more profitable use of both their catechisms.

II. While I make an attempt of this kind, I do no more than twenty others have done before me, who had a most high esteem for the Assembly's Catechism, and a great and just veneration for it. Has not Dr. Owen, Mr. Edward Bowles, Mr. Thomas Gouge,

* Mr. Thomas Lye, one of those worthy men who have written an explanation of the Assembly's Catechism, confesses there are hard and difficult words and phrases in it: His words are these, "Try the child's ability to express his knowledge of the meaning of every hard and difficult word or phrase in the preceding answer, because to repeat words and not to understand the truths contained in them is but to act the parrot, and profits very little.

Mr. A. Palmer, Mr. Matthew Henry, Mr. J. Noble, and other worthy men in England; Mr. Cotton in New-England, Mr. Willison in Scotland, &c. composed shorter catechisms for the use of children? And has not this been the very reason which has set most or all of them to work, *viz.* that even the shorter catechism of the assembly of divines has been thought by many to be too long for young children to retain in their memory, and that all of them have supposed it too hard for children to understand?

What means the multitude of explications of this catechism by so many famous divines, almost ever since it has been written? Do they not all declare that children are not able to understand this catechism without an explainer? And are not all these explications much too long for young children? What means the breaking of the long-connected sentences by some of these judicious explainers into short pieces, and expounding them piece by piece? Does it not plainly shew that they thought many of the answers to reach in length far beyond the stretch of the thinking powers of a child? Do they not expressly tell the world so in the preface?

One of these divines before mentioned, prefaces his catechism with these words: "When the venerable assembly composed this form of instruction, it seems that few of themselves thought it designed or fitted for babes; some answers being so long and so full of great sense, that though they may recite the words, that can be of little benefit till they also apprehend the meaning; for teaching is not thrusting a set of words into the memory, but helping the learner to understand what is said. Hence about that time we had a multitude of lesser catechisms aiming to stoop to the weak; these are now much forgotten. Some later essays I see to the same purpose, and this I hope may be of like use. After this is competently understood, then go on to teach them the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, so as to fix it in their memories and judgments." My heart agrees with this writer, and I would say no more than what he expresses.

I can sincerely declare, it is far from my design or my wish to exclude this catechism out of religious families; for if that should once be done, I have much reason to fear in our age there would scarce come a better in the room of it. All that I presume to propose to my friends is, that the Assembly's Catechism might be put into the hands of youth when they are grown up to twelve or thirteen years of age, or more, and that there might be some shorter and easier forms of instruction provided for young children to lay the foundation of the knowledge of religion in their tender minds, and to train them up by degrees till they are capable of using the Assembly's Catechism with understanding and judgment. This method would prepare them to read and learn it with greater profit than ever they would do if they learned it by heart in their infancy, without knowing what it means.

SECTION VII.

THE INCONVENIENCES OF TEACHING CHILDREN WHAT THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

Here some will be ready to say, where is the inconvenience of it, if children learn something which they do not understand in their younger years? When they have learned these hard words and sentences by rote, they may come to understand them afterward; and hereby they will have a form of sound words treasured up in their memories, which may be of use to them when they come to know their meaning. Now to answer this

objection, I will spend some time in shewing the great inconveniences and disadvantages of this way of catechising, or of pretending to teach children religion by catechisms which are far above their understanding.

I. Inconvenience. Then the little creatures will know almost nothing but words; They will be ignorant of the great and necessary things of religion till several years after, when they come to understand what is the sense and signification of so many hard words and phrases. And can your consciences be satisfied to treat your offspring at this rate? Shall their whole childhood be spent till eleven or twelve years of age, or perhaps longer, without any real or substantial knowledge of divine things, resting and feeding almost only upon sounds? Is this the best and happiest way to instil principles of godliness early into tender minds, *viz.* to teach them words which they cannot understand, in hope that they will come to understand them hereafter?

Words are but, as it were, the husk or shell of this divine food, whereby the souls of children must be nourished to everlasting life. Though the food is divine, it is possible the husk may be too hard for them to open. Is it the best method for the feeding and nourishing the bodies of young children, to bestow upon them nuts and almonds, in hopes that they will taste the sweetness of them when their teeth are strong enough to break the shell? Will they not be far better nourished by children's bread, and by food which they can immediately taste and relish? And do you not think that those children who were taught such plain and easy principles of religion as they can understand, will grow up to sincere practices of piety much sooner than others, who till eleven or twelve years old know little more than hard words? And a few hard words is almost all that they will know unless you have taught them these divine things in some plainer words, and by particular explications?

Let us take notice how exceeding solicitous the apostle was that the Corinthian converts, who abounded in the gifts of the Spirit, should understand every thing that was spoken in their assemblies; and with what a sacred severity he satirizes the practice of speaking divine things without teaching the meaning of them. Read his own words; 1 *Cor.* xiv. from the first verse to the 28. Hear how he exposes that unreasonable conduct, even of men inspired with gifts. *If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle? And so you, except ye utter by the tongue things easy to be understood—Ye shall speak into the air. If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian to me. I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*

II. Inconvenience. Such a practice turns the learning of the principles of religion into a painful and tiresome task instead of a pleasure. What a huge and heavy toil do you impose on those young creatures at four or five years old, when you force them to learn by heart such a number of words and sentences which they understand not? What a severe drudgery are they laid under to treasure up in their young memories such long complicated propositions, and such a train of connected sounds of which they have no ideas. Put yourselves for an hour or two in the place of your children: Impose a task on yourselves to get by heart a few of the deep and complicated propositions and demonstrations in geometry or in algebra, or in any mathematical science, which you understand not; or set yourselves to learn the tenth or the thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis, where the generations of Noah and Edom are rehearsed; make the experiment and learn hereby

what tiresome burdens you impose on your children; and judge whether this be the best and sweetest way to instil religion into them. Is not such a dry and painful task imposed on them much more likely to make them out of love with religion betimes, and settle their childhood in a rooted aversion to that which is so toilsome without any mixture of delight.

III. Inconvenience. Words which are not understood are much more difficult to be remembered. Can you imagine this is the most effectual way to fix divine things in their memory? Would not the principles of religion and catechisms be much easier learned, if children understood the sense and meaning of them as fast as they proceed? Would not the articles of christian doctrine and duty slide into their minds with more abundant ease and pleasure? Would they not be fixed much deeper in their remembrance if they took in ideas together with their words? And would they not be sooner brought into practice, and retained even to old age? For by this means the things as well as the words would take some hold of the memory, and gain a firmer root by their union; and the one would help to recall the other to mind upon every occasion. Words and things are most easily learned together.

Perhaps you intend that your sons and your little daughters should learn arithmetic as they grow up toward the business of human life. Why do you not teach them this art of numbers the same way as you teach them religion, if you think it is the best for their instruction and profit? Why are they not set to learn by heart in their infancy the definitions and the rules of addition, subtraction, division, and proportion? You may as well say, They will understand them in time, they will learn the meaning of them when they come to years of discretion.

No, my friends, you are all wiser, and have more reason, than to trifle at this rate in other parts of knowledge which you would bestow on your children; you endeavour to make them understand what they learn by heart, whensoever you think them fit to begin that part of learning: And why should the noblest knowledge, even that of religion, be taught them in so irrational a manner? Why must they be forced to get into their memories such a number of religious sentences and phrases, so many years before they can grasp the meaning of them, or so much as guess at the sense. But you say, "They will come to understand the meaning of them hereafter." To which I reply,

IV. Inconvenience. They will not arrive at the meaning of those words the sooner or better for having learned them by heart without a meaning; but the sound and chime of the words that has passed over the ears and the tongue five hundred times, without any signification, will rather go on to pass over still in the same mechanical manner, and will not seem to want a signification afterward. Thus the children of papists being taught from their infancy to say their pater-noster and ave-maria by rote, and to repeat their prayers in Latin, continue always contented to say prayers in the same manner, and do not want to know what the words mean.

And when protestant children have learned certain hard words and phrases, which were taught them as their religion, very early, it has been found too often by sad experience, that instead of learning the true meaning of these words and sentences at mature years, they content themselves with having once learned the words by heart, and perhaps entirely forgot them again, for want of knowing what they mean. It is five to one if ever they give themselves the trouble of reading and considering the sense of them, when

once their lessons are learned, and they have finished these painful tasks of childhood. Whereas if they understood the answers of a catechism when they had first learned them by heart, they would certainly have acquired some real and useful knowledge of God and Christ, and things of religion, and would much more effectually retain them in memory all their lives. Or if by virtue of a faithful memory persons should retain the words which they have learned in childhood, they will vainly imagine themselves furnished with a set of principles of religion, though they feel no power of them upon conscience in the conduct of life; and all this because these articles do not lie in the heart, or even in the understanding, as a set of principles for practice, but rather in the head or memory as a set of phrases.

How many persons are there who have been trained up from their infancy by religious parents in the knowledge of that accurate composition the Assembly's Catechism, and could repeat it from end to end when they were very young; but they pronounce it for the most part like so much Greek or Hebrew? Perhaps if they had been bred up to read and speak Latin from their early years, they might have some confused notion or idea of the meaning of several of the terms derived from the Latin sooner than some of their school-fellows; but there are but few sentences or whole answers that they could pronounce with understanding, or knew what they meant; their tongues have repeated them every Lord's-day in a mechanical manner, without a meaning; nor had they ever acquired any acquaintance with religion by all this labour of the memory in those earlier years, had it not been for the care which their parents have taken to instruct them by various methods of conversation, and by talking with them in plainer terms and easier forms of words than the questions and answers of that catechism, though it be so comprehensive a body of divinity; and the reason is, because it is fitter for youths, or for men, than for young children.

Perhaps it will be urged then, "Why may not the Assembly's Catechism be still taught children in their younger years, and let their parents expound it to them?" But I desire it may be considered, 1. That few parents or masters of families have such a happy skill in definitions of words, as readily to explain the sense of all the harder words and phrases in that catechism in very easy terms, and to bring them down to the understanding of children; they that try will find it no easy matter; for if it were so easy for every parent to do it, why have so many divines laboured in expounding it, and published their expositions? 2. In this method the young child will not learn any whole scheme or system of his religion in several years, if he must not arrive at it till he has got by heart all the answers in the Assembly's Catechism, together with the explication and meaning of all the terms and phrases in it; for the explaining of the answers, to make young children understand them, will sometimes be much larger than the answers themselves. And, 3. It is surely much better to teach the child a catechism which is shorter in itself, that he may learn the whole early, and which is composed of such easy and familiar ideas and terms, as he can understand without so much need of explaining. But I proceed to the next inconvenience of teaching children sentences so far above their understanding.

V. Inconvenience. May we not have just reason to fear that the holy things of our religion, have not only been made the early aversion of children, but have been exposed to disreputation and contempt, by teaching them such a number of strange phrases which they could not understand? How often have I heard children at four or five years old

gabble over long sentences of divinity in such imperfect words and broken sounds, that it hath been sufficiently evident it was like a mere gibberish to them? They were told indeed that this was their religion; but they must needs acquire a strange notion of religion by this means; they must think religion a very troublesome thing, which cost them so much pains without any pleasure; and they might early begin to judge that religion was a very obscure and mysterious matter, since they could understand so little of it; and perhaps under this prejudice they never took pains to understand it, because from their infancy they were made to learn something as their religion which they could not understand.

Now though I am firmly persuaded there are great and glorious mysteries in our religion, which could never have been known till they were revealed, and some of them do now far surpass our full comprehension; such as the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, his satisfaction for our sins, and the operations of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, &c. yet in the main I am assured that religion is a very intelligible thing; and as it is the most reasonable thing in the world, I am persuaded it ought to be let both into the memories and hearts of children in a reasonable way, that is, by their understanding.

VI. Inconvenience. Shall I add in the last place, if children are trained up to use words without meanings, they will get a habit of dealing in sounds instead of ideas, and of mistaking words for things, than which there is scarce any thing more pernicious to the reason and understanding of man; nor is there any thing that tends more to corrupt and spoil the judgment in its early exercises. And particularly such a practice is likely to have a more unhappy influence in matters of religion. When we are once taught to treasure up substantial articles of faith in syllables and phrases which we do not understand, at other times we shall be tempted to take mere phrases and syllables instead of articles of faith; and this is the ready way, in our following years, to lead us to contend even for human phrases with furious zeal, as though they were the very substance of religion, whether there be any meaning that belongs to them or no.

The result of all my discourse and argument tends to this one point, *viz.* That catechising is the best and happiest method for the instruction of children in the principles of religion, in the knowledge of God and their duty; and whatsoever catechisms are impressed on the memories of children in their most tender years, they should be taught the meaning of them, as far as possible, as fast as they learn them by heart.

If all these inconveniences of the contrary practice cannot persuade parents and masters to teach children the principles of christianity in such words as they can understand, I must leave them to be convinced by making the same unsuccessful experiment themselves as thousands have done before them. If they will put a man's coat on a child, the child may be cumbered with his long and loose habiliments, and yet be starved with cold. But if persons are convinced of the truth of this proposition, that children should be taught the things of God in a way and manner suited to their capacity and their tender years, I would then humbly propose whether it would not be best that catechistical forms might be drawn up according to such rules as these which follow.

SECTION VIII.

RULES FOR COMPOSING CATECHISMS FOR CHILDREN.

I. The very first rule should be that which I have before mentioned, *viz.* That different catechisms be composed for different ages and capacities, each of which should contain an abstract of christianity, or a view of our whole religion in miniature. In the first of these all the questions and answers should be as short, plain and easy as possible for young children; others should be gradually more large and full, and enter a little farther into the things of God, which they should learn according to their increasing age, and the growth of their understanding; and the last of them may be that comprehensive system of christian religion, which is commonly called the Assembly's Catechism.

Here it will be objected, first, that when children have learned one catechism, they will not be willing to learn another afterward; nor will they easily be brought to learn three or four distinct catechisms.

Answer. Experience convinces us that this is a mistake, provided the catechisms are not too long. How many children are there who do at the same time learn the Assembly's Catechism, and the little Catechism of Scriptural Names, formed of such questions as these, Who was the first man? Who was the first woman? &c. And how many are there who have learned the church-catechism in their youngest years, who have afterwards learned the assembly's? How many have learned the Assembly's Catechism, and yet afterward have learned Mr. Flavel's or some shorter explication? A moderate degree of diligence both in teachers and learners would banish this objection, if catechisms were made short, easy and intelligible, so as to allure the child to read and learn them as a matter of choice and delight, and not as a mere task and burden.

Objection II. But would it not be much better to compose one plain catechism for all the stages of childhood and youth, and let them learn as much as they could of it at four or five years old, and so go on to learn further at six and seven, at eight and nine and ten, till they have finished the whole?

Answer. No, by no means: This cannot be so happy and useful a method for the instruction of children; for then children will never have any knowledge of some of the most important points in our religion till they are eight or ten years old, or more, and are come to the end of their catechism: Whatsoever is placed in the former part of their catechism they would indeed be acquainted with in their infancy more largely and more particularly; but they would know nothing at all of those doctrines which should naturally be placed in the middle or end of it, *viz.* The redemption by Christ, the blessings of the gospel, the future judgment, and heaven and hell, because they have not learned far enough in their catechisms. Thus they would remain too long in ignorance of the peculiar doctrines and duties of the christian religion. Whereas if some short and complete catechism be framed for infancy, by this means children in these earlier and shorter forms would learn and remember a whole scheme of the most substantial articles of our religion, both in doctrine and duty. They would attain a general and comprehensive view of christianity, so much as is sufficient for their practice in their younger years; especially if assisted but a little by some plain and easy conversation with their parents about these things.

This short and general view of christianity will make them better understand the

scripture itself whensoever they read any of the chief doctrines of godliness there. They will better apprehend the meaning of sermons which they hear in public; they will more easily take in the particular branches and articles of our holy religion when they come to read them in the larger catechisms; and it will teach them to judge better in the affairs of religion when they have learned the general substance of it in their infancy, contracted into a short easy scheme, and brought within the grasp and survey of their understanding in their earliest years.

Nor can it be objected here, with any colour of reason, that in their second and third catechisms they will be put to learn over again the same things which they have already learned in the first; for I have shewn, that though the same articles of faith and practice are inserted in the following catechisms, yet this is done in other forms of expression, and with more particular enlargements as to the sense. Thus the child, as he proceeds from one catechism to another, will have the advantage of learning the same great truths of christianity more perfectly by the variety of language in which they are expressed, and the amplification of them in more particulars.

I add further, That the scripture itself intimates what we find by constant experience, *viz.* That when we teach knowledge to children who are weaned from the milk, and make them who are drawn from the breasts to understand doctrine, precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little; *Isaiah* xxviii. 9, 10. Their young understandings must be addressed and allured in various and repeated forms of speech, and their memories must be refreshed in an agreeable manner, otherwise all our teachings will be in vain.

II. Rule. In the younger catechisms insert only those things which are necessary to be known by children, and which are plain and easy to be understood by them.

There are many things relating to our religion, which are not only very important, but very necessary in themselves, in order to bring about our salvation, both in the counsels and in the transactions of God and Christ; and yet they are by no means necessary to be known even by men in order to their interest in this salvation. Otherwise no man could be saved who could not enter into the incomprehensible depths of the nature and counsels of God. There are also many things needful and proper to be known by persons of maturer years, which children should not be troubled with, as being too far above their understandings, and not requisite for any part of their practice. I think it best to have scarce any thing mentioned in these younger catechisms but what children can in some measure conceive, or of what they can frame some tolerable notion, what they can put to some proper use, and what will direct, or some way influence, or assist their practice. Thus they will learn religion indeed, and not mere words and syllables.

Under this head I may observe, that it is hardly possible to compose a catechism for young children in so evangelical a manner as may be done for the instruction of grown persons. Young children are more easily taught to understand what are the chief duties they must practise, and what are the chief vices they should avoid; and they more readily learn the rewards of obedience and the punishments due to sin. They may be taught indeed that they are sinners, and that there is no salvation for them but by the mercy of God and for the sake of Jesus Christ, who hath suffered death which they have deserved; and that they must pray to God to pardon their sins for the sake of Jesus Christ. This is as much of faith in Christ as they can well understand very early. But they can never take in the whole scheme of the covenant of grace, with the doctrines of

election, regeneration, and of justification by faith in Christ, or be taught to distinguish how far, and in what sense works are to be excluded from our justification. Therefore if any persons imagine some expressions in these catechisms, and especially in the first of them, to be too legal, let them consider, it is hardly possible to make the generality of children understand much more of the gospel than I have here represented. And indeed if it were possible, I can hardly think it proper to enter the spirits of children into nice distinctions and controversies.

III. Rule. Seek out and make use of the very plainest words that can convey the ideas of these necessary things to the minds of children. Endeavour to find out such ways of expressing the things of God as are borrowed from the things of men: And as far as the dignity of the subject will permit, use those expressions which are familiar, and are known to children in their younger years. It is a needful advice with regard to words, as well as to things, that when we teach children we must take the apostle's example, and provide milk for babes.

In this case therefore we are not always to choose out the most elegant and polite forms of speech, nor even the most significant and comprehensive words, if they are hard to be understood; but we should rather use easier and plainer and more familiar forms of speech, which come something nearer to our ideas of divine things, though they may not fully come up to our manly conceptions of them; for it is much better that a child should have some tolerable notion of the things of religion conveyed to the mind by the plainest words that come near to those sacred ideas, than that he should be taught to pronounce the most polite, the most comprehensive phrases, the most accurate and expressive terms, under which he has no notion at all of the things designed.

For this reason the language of scripture is not always necessary to be made the language of our younger catechisms: Indeed where the words of scripture are plain and intelligible to children, they should be preferred before other expressions; but since the scripture was written for men rather than children, since it abounds in metaphorical expressions and in eastern idioms of speech, since the doctrines and duties of it are not delivered in a short catechetical or systematical manner, and since they are often expressed with a special reference to some particular time, or place, or persons, and intermingled with long sentences of argument, or particular narratives of fact, I cannot think it best to confine our instruction of children to the very expressions of scripture, when we can find shorter, easier and more familiar forms of speech to convey the same doctrines and duties to the understanding. It is evident therefore that it cannot be always necessary to use scriptural phrases in younger catechisms, when those phrases of scripture are hard to be understood.

Now if this second and third rule were duly attended to, and no sentiments nor phrases were used in the instruction of children but what were plain and easy, it would cut off several superfluous things from the catechisms which are written for younger years; as for instance,

1. There would be no subtle distinctions, no learned logical explications of the deep things of God, no hard scholastic terms would be mingled with our youngest forms of instruction; for how useful soever some of these things may be in the following years of life, to give a more perfect acquaintance with the articles of faith, yet when we are feeding young children with knowledge, I fear such nice scholastic explications would be like putting gravel in their milk, or mingling stones together with their bread.

2. If these rules are observed there would be no quarrelsome controversies brought into

the religion of infants, no little party-contest mingled with the great and substantial things of faith and godliness: Nor would the forms of question and answer be ever dressed up in the language of particular parties. Where children are taught all these distinctions, these lesser differences with zeal, and engaged in these parties betimes, it hath done much injury to christianity in the several nations that profess the religion of Christ. Children have been made zealous Lutherans, Calvinists, episcopalians, presbyterians, independents, baptists, before they have been made christians; and it hath had an unhappy influence to kindle and maintain the fire and fury of parties, and to banish and destroy charity and love among those who agree in the necessary and most important things of religion.*

All the most necessary points should be taught first, and others afterwards. And it may be most proper that when these lesser differences of opinion are taught, they should be represented to the child as things not necessary to their salvation; and consequently that persons of very different opinions in these things may be very good christians and accepted of God. By this means the seeds and principles of these great christian duties of charity and love and forbearance would be inlaid in the hearts of youth. And I might add also that these lesser things of religion would then be in great measure left to the choice and determination of persons in their advanced years, when their understandings are better able to pass a judgment on these points, while the most early catechisms contain only those most important things wherein the generality of christians are agreed.

I. Caution. Not that I would have catechisms written in so very loose and general a manner, as to neglect the great and glorious doctrines of the incarnation of the Son of God, the sacrifice and atonement of Christ for sin, and the promised aids of the sanctifying Spirit. It is granted indeed that the principles of the religion of nature and reason are first in the order of things, and are also more easy to be understood than the principles of revelation and christianity, and therefore they should begin the child's catechism; yet these doctrines of christian revelation ought certainly to be inserted in the forms of sound words as early as children can be supposed to understand them, because I take them to be the peculiar articles and glories of our christian faith and hope.

II. Caution. Nor is it at all amiss in parents to train up their children in their own forms of worship, whether they be Lutheran or Calvinist, conformist, or non-conformist, pædo-baptist or antipædo-baptist, at least so far as any of their peculiar opinions enter into their forms of public religion: It is hardly possible to avoid this; for religion cannot be practised but it must be in some particular mode, therefore children must be educated in some forms, and opinions, and modes of worship; and it is the duty of parents to educate them in those ways which they think nearest the truth and most pleasing to God. But all that I mean here is this, that as I would not have these particularities of different sects be made to enter into the public practice of religion further than is needful, so it should be far the greatest care and solicitude of parents to teach their children christianity itself, rather than the particular and distinguishing tenets of sects or parties:

* Here let it be observed, that I do not mention protestantism and popery as some of those lesser differences among christians which children need not be acquainted with, especially where the popish religion is practised, and where the tender minds of children are in danger of being infected by it. For popery is the religion of Antichrist, and therefore I can hardly call it christianity. In general indeed it includes and contains the christian faith, but it is so shameful a corruption of it by so many mixtures of error, and introduces so many traditions and inventions and decrees of men to join with scripture as the rule of religion, that children should early be warned against it. On the other hand, children should as early be taught what is the great and fundamental principle of the protestant religion, and that is, that the word of God alone is a sufficient rule both of our faith and practice.

And be sure to let very little of this matter come into their younger catechisms. But I proceed to the fourth rule.

IV. Rule. Even among the important things of religion there is no need to enumerate all the particulars under any general with too great exactness. Where there are many special duties or doctrines belong to one general head, it is sufficient to reckon up three or four of the chief of them, and let these be such as are most proper for children to know, and most suited to the age and circumstances of childhood. So for instance, when we ask in the First, or Young Child's Catechism, "What is your duty toward man?" It is enough to answer, "My duty towards man is, to obey my parents, to speak the truth always, and be honest and kind to all." So in the Second Catechism, when we enquire concerning the worship which God requires of us, it is enough to mention thanks or praises for mercies received, prayers for mercies wanted, and diligent attention to his word; nor is there any need in this place to speak of adoration, confession, humiliation for sin, self-resignation, trust and dependence, though they may be all included in the large idea of worship.

We find that God himself, when he wrote his laws on tables of stone for the people of Israel, which was the infant state of the church, practised that very thing which I now propose. Instead of a long and particular detail of the duties of piety which belong to the first table, such as the adoration and fear of God, the love of God, and trusting in him, obeying his will, and submitting to his providences, he sums all these up in general in the first command, "Thou shalt have no other God before me:" Or, "Thou shalt have me for thy only God:" But he particularly forbids idolatry, and the abuse of God's name, and enjoins the holy sabbath of the seventh day, and all in distinct commands, because he would inculcate these things in a special manner on the Israelites, as peculiarly proper for their state and circumstances.

If in the youngest catechisms we were to reckon up long catalogues of the particular doctrines and duties which are contained in the more general ones, the memories of children would be over-burdened, and their tender minds confounded with too great a variety; then their spirits are fatigued, and they grow tired of learning; whereas if they were led into an easy acquaintance with the great and general things of religion, and were taught only such particulars as are most suited to and proper for their age, learning would be rendered pleasant to them in childhood, and they would easily arrive at a more spacious and extensive knowledge in their growing years.

V. Rule. Among those easier points of religion, which are plain enough to be inserted into younger catechisms, choose out rather such as are most practical. Do not encumber nor entangle the minds or memories of children with notions and speculations which are not so needful to influence their behaviour toward God or men. By making every thing tend toward practice which they find in their catechisms, children will be early led into this important truth, *viz.* That the chief business of religion is practice rather than notion, and this will have a happy effect upon their future opinions and conduct; whereas if their early catechisms are too much taken up in speculative points and controversial matters, these young creatures will imagine that religion is a business of notion, and controversy, and dispute, and that it has not so much to do about the government of their hearts or lives.

VI. Rule. Let not the answers, especially in the younger catechisms, consist of very long sentences: But if there happen to be a necessity of giving a pretty long answer to

any question, let it be distinguished into shorter parts with such plainness and evidence, that the child may find apparent and sensible breaks and rests in it. This will much assist the young understanding, which is not able to comprehend the sense of one continued sentence prolonged into many lines; and it will be greatly helpful to the memory both in getting the answer by heart at first, and in the recollection of it upon every occasion. In all the longer answers in the catechism for children you will find this rule observed.

VII. Rule. Let the questions and answers stand in so easy, so natural, and so happy a connexion with each other, that every answer may become the occasion of some following question; and as much as may be, let it be the occasion of the very next question that follows. The memory of the catechiser will be greatly assisted hereby, and he will by this means have the question ready; and he will also appear to ask no questions but what are necessary for the child to answer: Thus the child will seem to be under a necessity of learning an answer to every question, because the question itself rises from his own words.

VIII. Rule. Let the questions and answers be framed in such a manner that the child may find himself, and his own case, and his own interest concerned in them all the way. I would advise therefore that at least in the questions of the younger catechisms they should frequently use the pronouns *you* and *your*, as, What must you do to be saved? And the answer should as often use the words *I* and *my*, and *mine;* viz. *I must be sorry for my sins, &c.* I think this form of instruction will impress children much more sensibly, and lead them sooner to pratical godliness, than if the catechism speaks only in the third person concerning mankind in general; for whatsoever we speak concerning man or men, children will hardly think themselves so much concerned in it.

IX. Rule. Upon this account I think the very frame and order of things in younger catechisms, should be so composed as that children may be led into inward and practical religion as fast as the knowledge of it is let into their minds: Let them be acquainted with their duty to God immediately upon their being led into the knowledge of him: As soon as they are taught what sin is, they should be convinced that they are sinners, and have need of a Saviour; and at the same time as they are informed who this Saviour is, and what he does for our salvation, they should be told also what is their duty with regard to him, and what they are to expect from him, or from God for his sake. The most natural view and order of things in which the christian religion can be represented usefully to the minds of children, seems to be this that follows,

First, Let them be taught that God is their Maker, and that they are made on purpose to know and serve him, an be happy in his love. Then let them be led to seek the knowledge of God, and their duty, out of his word or the holy scriptures; for to learn it by the light of nature is too hard a task for young children. When you have shewed them who God is, and what is their duty to God himself, and to man by the command of God, let them then have some notice and conviction that they have not fulfilled their duty, but that they have broken the law of God, and are fallen under his anger. And here may be introduced the doctrine of *original sin* in a brief manner as far as the child can understand it; but in the very first catechism it is hardly necessary for a young child of four years old.

Then comes in naturally that great question, *How can we hope to be saved from the anger of God?* And thus the doctrine of the gospel comes necessarily into sight, *viz.* The incarnation of Christ, and his death in the room and stead of sinners; the duty of

repentance for sin; the belief and hope of pardoning mercy from God for the sake of the sufferings of Christ, &c. And when children are a little older, in the Second Catechism, we may proceed to a larger and more particular account of the person of Christ, of his ascension to heaven, his intercession and his government there, of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and our particular obedience due to him. After this it is reasonable to shew the child his inability to fulfil these duties by his own strength, and lead him into the promised aid of the Holy Spirit as far as his young understanding can receive it, together with the other means and helps with which God has furnished us in order to assist us in our way to heaven, *viz. The Bible, ministers and sacraments.*

And when we have thus done the will of God in this world, it is necessary to bring death into sight, and the existence of the soul after death, and Christ's coming to judgment to call all the world to account for their behaviour in this life: And to let children know that the effects and consequents of this judgment will be the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked. These future transactions are usually the most powerful motives to religion in the present life, and therefore it is fit children should be acquainted with them betimes.

Now when these things are comprized in about four and twenty questions in the first catechism for infancy, and in about seventy or eighty in the second,* the child will have had a whole scheme of the christian religion, both in the doctrines and the duties of it, let into his mind in a short and compendious manner in each of these catechisms; and this is sufficient to direct and influence the chief part of his practice in those younger years of life, till growing faculties shall render him fit for further and deeper acquaintance with the doctrines of christianity.

For this reason I beg leave to say, that the catechism composed by the assembly of divines, as comprehensive and valuable as it is, yet is not so fit for young children, not only because it is too long for their memories, as containing above a hundred questions and answers, and some of them too are pretty long and hard to be understood; but because there is scarce any thing practical taught the child till he has learned more than one third part of it. This book is certainly less proper for children, because the highest mysteries of christianity, and all the more speculative and sublime doctrines of the gospel are laid down in the first part of it, as far as question xxxix. which perhaps takes up a whole year's toil and labour of memory before the child is taught any thing practical either of its duty to God or its duty to man: As though a child need not be taught God's commandments nor his own duty, till he hath learned the infinity and eternity of God, the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, the decrees of God, the covenant of works made with Adam as our head, our original sin and misery by the fall, the doctrine of election and redemption, the constitution of the person and the offices of Christ, his humiliation and exaltation, together with the application of his redemption by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the benefits of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the happiness of believers at their death and resurrection; for all these things are introduced as matters of faith before any rules of duty are mentioned.

Though it be granted that these are glorious parts of our religion, and may be taught

* Note, In the preface to the Second or Child's Catechism, I have shewn that there are about twenty-six questions and answers which may be omitted in the first teaching of it, if parents think it too long, and I have marked them out for that purpose: By this means the Second Catechism will be reduced to about fifty questions. But let the other twenty-six be learned before the child proceeds to the Assembly's, which I call the Youth's Catechism.

as soon as a child can understand them, yet I humbly conceive it cannot be necessary to withhold a child from the knowledge of his duty to God and man till he hath learned all these sublime doctrines. It seems to me a much more natural method first to shew the child the law of God, with his duty to obey it, and then to convince him that he has broken this holy law, and that he is exposed to God's displeasure here and hereafter: Now upon this view the gospel of Christ comes in as a most glorious relief, and the child will understand and see how much he hath need of such a gospel and such a Saviour, and he will attend with more serious diligence to the name of Jesus and the blessed discoveries of grace, when he finds he is exposed to the just anger of God for his sins, if he does not betake himself to this relief.

X. Rule. It may be proper enough in the larger of these catechisms, or those which are composed for a youth of twelve or fourteen years of age, that the whole scheme or method be different from those which are framed for mere infancy or childhood. So the Assembly's Catechism is written in a different method from those which I have composed for younger years, though the same religion and the same gospel is exhibited in both. By such a diversity of methods young persons will see the same truths set in a different light: And it may be of considerable use, especially to those of a brighter genius and better parts, to turn their religion on all sides and learn how beautiful it is in every situation, to observe how happily all parts correspond with one another, and all conspire in the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the salvation of sinful man. But I think for all the younger catechisms it is much better they should be formed in the very same method, lest while children are so very young and ignorant, variety of methods should embarrass rather than enlighten them: For this reason I have framed my two first catechisms on the very same plan.

XI. Rule. In those younger catechisms where the scheme and method is much the same, let the questions and answers be expressed in different forms of words, and the manners of enquiry and reply bear a little different turn, even though the sense may be the very same. This will have two considerable advantages in it,—1. The child will not be ready to intermingle the answers of the younger and elder catechisms together; which he would perpetually do if the questions were expressed in the same words, or if the answers begun in the same forms of speech.—2. The child will gain more knowledge of the things of religion and of the language of christianity, by having the same doctrines and duties set before him in different forms of speech, as his age and understanding advances. But if in composing two such catechisms any person should think there may be a necessity of repeating the very same question in the same words, then let the answer be exactly the same too: And then a child will be under no danger of mistake nor of intermingling one catechism with another.

XII. Rule. Let there be one or more well-chosen texts of scripture added to support almost every answer, and to prove the several parts of it. This will shew the child that we own the scripture, or word of God, to be the divine and supreme rule of our belief and practice, and that this catechism is borrowed from the Bible, as the great source and original of our holy religion; this will make him know betimes that his catechisms are not to be put in the room and place of the Bible. All the works of men may be capable of mistakes, but the scripture is the only infallible and certain rule of revealed truth and christian knowledge. It will also have another good effect, and that is, it will by degrees lead the child into the understanding and remembrance of some of the most useful texts

of scripture on which the chief articles of christianity are founded, and furnish his tender mind with the rich treasure of the word of God. Yet in the very youngest catechism perhaps little children would find this addition of scripture too tiresome and tedious, nor would it be of any considerable use till they are old enough to compare the answers in the catechism with the words and sense of scripture, and to observe how one corresponds with the other; therefore I have omitted the scriptural proofs of the First Catechism, though I have with diligence and care collected and added them to the Second: And in the Assembly's Catechism, which is a catechism for youth, this is done largely in some editions of it.

XIII. Rule. When a catechism is framed for youth of twelve years old or upwards, there is no necessity that the terms and phrases which are used in it should be so plain and familiar as in those which are composed for children; and indeed it is better that the terms and language of scripture, such as *justification, adoption, sanctification, &c.* should be made use of here, partly because it may be supposed that these children may have acquired some notions of these things at this age by their religious education, and partly because it is necessary that by this time they should come to read the scriptures wherein these terms are used, with a greater degree of understanding; it is fit therefore that this sort of language, in which it hath pleased God to reveal divine things to men, should be made more familiar to them while they are growing up to manly age. This rule is observed in a good degree in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, which I have here inserted in its order for the instruction of youth.

Yet it is certain that in far the greatest number of christian families there is not care enough, or there is not skill enough in the parents or masters to explain these terms, and lead their children or servants into clear and easy ideas of divine things, as they are delivered to us in many words and phrases of scripture, or in the language of this comprehensive catechism; and it is for this reason that so many learned men have spent their time in writing expositions upon it. But it must be observed, that most of these expositions, instead of explaining the words used in the Assembly's Catechism, have enlarged upon the doctrines and duties of our holy religion, to give a more full and extensive view of all the parts and branches that belong to it; among which Mr. Flavel's work is one of the best. Those who break the long answers into pieces, and explain them in parts, are in my opinion of the greatest use to young persons. I think that which is said to be written by Dr. Wallis is of this kind; but they are all too long for children.

There are some persons have imagined, that in order to render it easy for younger understandings and memories, they should throw their whole exposition into a great number of questions about every thing that relates to the doctrines contained in each answer of the Assembly's Catechism, and that the child should have nothing to remember, but only to answer yes or no; but I fear this is of no very great use to younger children, unless a reason or a scripture be added. Where the parent or master speaks almost all that is said in his asking the question, and the child has no more to answer than yes or no, it gives but small improvement to the understanding; for since there is but one right and one wrong answer, the child may happen to give the right answer often by guess, without any knowledge what the question means.

XIV. Rule. I have often thought that the shortest comment upon that catechism, and most useful for those who learn it by heart, might consist of a mere explication of the words and phrases which are more difficult to be understood, placed under every answer wherein those words are used. Such an exposition as this would very little

increase the bulk or price of the catechism itself, as it would also be very favourable and indulgent to the memory of learners. The particular rules proper to be observed in such an exposition are these:

1. As we suppose the youth that learn it to be twelve or fourteen years old, there will be no need of explaining the more common terms and language used in it, such as, *the word of God, law, duty, rule, wisdom, power, &c.* for they will be known at that age to all those who have had the advantage of a religious education.

2. There need be no explication given of those words which are directly and expressly explained in any of the following answers of the catechism, such as *creation, providence, Christ's humiliation and exaltation, sacrament, baptism, Lord's-supper.*

3. As for the words that may be used in different senses, or extend to many and various kinds of things, I think it is not necessary to shew in how many senses they may be taken, or how many things they extend to, but rather to declare briefly what is the sense of them as they stand in that very answer of the catechism; as for instance, the word *sacrifice* does not always mean an expiation for sin, but sometimes it signifies the offering of corn, wine, or oil, in a way of thanksgiving; and metaphorically it is used for our christian duties of praise to God and bounty to the poor; *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. But since it is applied in this catechism only to the sacrifice of Christ which atones for our sins, it is better to define it here, *some living creature slain and offered up to God to answer for some offence committed against him:* And it is my opinion that this way of explaining will lead an ignorant person in a shorter, plainer, and easier manner to understand the answers given in the catechism, than if there were a long detail of the various senses of the word.

4. There is a little difficulty how to interpret those terms or phrases which have been made matter of controversy amongst those very ministers and christians who approve of this catechism in general, and teach it in their families. Now I think it best to let as few as possible of those controversies be intimated or awakened: And let those few terms or phrases have their most general sense affixed to them, such as verges toward no extreme: And let them be explained in so moderate and catholic a signification as may not run high into the sentiments of any party, but may, as far as the words will bear it, be construed in such a meaning as we may reasonably suppose was approved by the whole venerable assembly who composed it, and such as is agreeable to far the greatest part of those who make use of this catechism to instruct their children. And yet after all I cannot forbear to wish, that some few expressions in it had been formed with a more catholic latitude, so as might have given less disgust to any pious minds, but might have rendered it more universally acceptable to our nation.

5. There is another rule that ought to be observed also in explaining all the difficult terms and phrases, and that is, that if possible there might no hard word enter into the explication, but that all the terms used in the explication of the words might be much easier to be understood, and more plain and familiar than the terms and phrases which are explained.

XV. Rule. At the same time that the youngest catechism of the principles of religion is learned, the child may also begin to attain a little historical knowledge of the Bible, by way of question and answer. This should be drawn up in as easy, plain, and simple a style as can well be contrived. I confess the Bible is so large a book, and contains so rich a variety of entertaining histories, and that from so early a date as the beginning of the world, that it is impossible all the necessary things of this kind can be crowded into so small a compass as to be imposed on the memories of children in their youngest

years; I would propose therefore that two catechisms be formed: The first should be called a catechism of scripture-names, and it should contain nothing but the name of the person with one single character of him. This might be sufficient for the years of infancy.

The second, which I call the historical catechism, should be framed for children and youth from seven years old to fifteen, and should run through the scripture in a short account both of remarkable persons and things: And as I keep my eye on the capacities of children, it should be very plain, and have as few hard words in it as possible. Then it will be pleasant to young minds, when it consists of short and various incidents or stories which employ and delight the fancy. As it begins at the creation of all things, so it should run down to the days of the apostles and the setting up the kingdom of Christ among men, which is as far as the history of scripture reaches. It is true, this field is so very large, that whosoever writes such a catechism for children must necessarily leave out many worthy names of men which should not be forgotten, and a multitude of things which one could wish might be inserted: And I am so well assured of the great usefulness of instructing children and young persons in the transactions of scripture, that I have composed a much larger summary of the sacred history by way of question and answer, which lies by me, and perhaps may hereafter see the light.* But the design of the present catechism for the instruction of tender years must limit it to a very narrow compass. Many valuable monuments of sacred antiquity must be omitted, lest the fancy of children be overwhelmed and cloyed, as well as their memory over-burdened, especially considering they are learning some catechism of the principles of religion at the same time.

The special parts of the sacred history which should be inserted into these two catechisms are chiefly such as these, *viz.*

1. Those that will naturally lead the child into the knowledge of God as the Maker, the Governor, and the Judge of the world: Therefore there should be mentioned several of the works of God, as the creation of all things, the interest of providence in the affairs of men, and particularly the rewards of the righteous, and the punishments of the wicked.

2. Those parts of history that are most necessary or useful in order to understand the doctrine of the gospel and the religion of Christ the better; such are the transactions with Adam in his creation and in his fall, the promise of the Messiah to Abraham, the conduct of God towards the Jews in their travels from Egypt to Canaan, some of the laws and ordinances which he gave them by the hand of Moses, the doctrine of sacrifices and the priesthood, the care of God for his chosen people of Israel under their judges and their kings, their sins and the punishment of them, their captivity in Babylon and restoration to their own land, the life, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ the Son of God, his commission to his apostles to preach the gospel, and their amazing success in converting both Jews and gentiles.

3. There should be inserted also some of those incidents of the Old Testament which are rehearsed in the New to some very considerable and valuable purposes in the christian religion; such are the affairs of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and David, Elijah and Elisha, Jonah and Daniel, &c.

4. Such as will give occasion to a child easily to draw some moral or religious lesson by plain and short inferences, and particularly such as relate to parents and to children, in which their stage of life hath a very peculiar interest. Therefore it may be proper to insert the carriage of Cain to his brother, and that of Ham, Shem, and Japheth to their

* This hath been published, entitled, a Short View of the whole Scripture History.

father, and of Joseph to his brethren; the carriage of Eli to his sons, the characters of Samuel and Josiah, of Timothy and of Christ himself in their younger years. For the same reason it is fit to mention the rebellion and death of Absalom, the leprosy which was inflicted on Gehazi, and death on Ananias and Sapphira for telling a lie, the slaughter of the children that mocked Elisha by a bear, &c. that children may be warned against those sins to which they are most liable.

5. Such histories should have some place here as are most universally known by all christians, and are most frequently mentioned in conversation, and taught in religious families; especially if they have any thing marvellous or extraordinary in them; for this more sensibly attracts the minds of children and gives them most delight in learning. Upon this account in the Old Testament the books of Genesis and Exodus may perhaps have rather a larger share in these catechisms.

It may be observed also in the description of the character of a person we need not always use that character which is most considerable in itself, but that which will most sensibly strike the minds of children: And so in the description of places we need say little or nothing of their geographical situation which would be useless to children, but we should rather describe them by the most remarkable circumstance of scripture history that related to them. Nineveh is the great city where Jonah was sent to preach, and Antioch should be described as the city where the disciples of Christ were first called christians. In like manner in the stories or narratives, we may better neglect some action really more considerable in itself to insert another which some readers may think less considerable, if it strikes young minds more powerfully and agreeably, and may also be of more use to children.

There is another rule which may be observed in composing the catechism of names, and the historical catechism, *viz.* In the catechism of names it is best to put the name of the person into the question, and give the character of the person in the answer; as, Question, Who was Adam? Answer, The first man that God made; which I judge more proper for children than to make the mere name to be the answer to the question; for this would burden and tire their infant memories as soon as they can speak, with mere Hebrew words and hard names, which they seldom pronounce plain and true; nor would the parents asking the question give them so explicit a knowledge of the character of the person as if they are required to remember and speak it themselves by way of answer.

In the historical catechism, which may be begun to be learned a year or two afterward, we may sometimes change this order, and put the character of the person into the question, and the name into the answer: As, Question, Who was the first man that God made? Answer, Adam: Supposing that by this time children are well acquainted with the hard names, and can pronounce them plain. And besides, this order of things may give a better introduction to the next question which relates to some remarkable action of the person mentioned.

In the historical catechism there might be annexed one text of scripture at least to every answer; but we need only name the book, chapter, and verse, without citing the words at length, which would take up too much room, and be less useful to children in their youngest age of life. But when they come to six or seven years old or more, and are able to find out any text of scripture by the name of the book, chapter, and verse, then it will be a useful and entertaining exercise for them to seek out the complete history of all those persons in the Bible who are mentioned in their catechism.

To conclude, since none of these catechisms are very large, they may be easily gotten by heart by thirteen or fourteen years of age, and even before they are treasured up in the memory, they should be often read by children; and perhaps also elder persons, whose knowledge is but small, may profit by them. But what other rules are needful for the more profitable use of these catechisms, shall be inserted in the particular prefaces that stand before them; to which I refer the reader.

The catechisms for children being so short, it was not possible to insert in them all the particular sins and follies to which that age is liable; and yet perhaps nothing would be a better guard against these follies and sins, than to have them in a particular detail and description set before the eyes of children, with a word of caution against them drawn both from reason and scripture; this is done by way of question and answer, not to be imposed on children to learn it by heart, but to read it frequently; and I have called it, A Preservative from Sin and Folly.

After all our studies and cares in every age to make the great things of God intelligible and plain to the younger and the more ignorant part of mankind, there will be still too much ignorance of God, and Christ, and religion, found even in a nation blessed with liberty and the gospel; it is needful that parents, and masters, and ministers, should labour in prayer, as well as in writing and teaching, that God may succeed all our cares with a divine blessing, that he may print the great and necessary truths of christianity on the souls of children and youth by his own Spirit, that he may write the duties of it in their hearts, and make them legible in their lives. Oh! may the rising generation in Great Britain, have their minds and consciences so divinely inlaid with the sacred articles of our holy religion, that they may stand the shock of temptation in this day of growing infidelity, and stand up in future times to profess, defend, and adorn the gospel of Christ; and may these little unambitious labours of mine for the use of children and babes be so far blessed of heaven, as to bear some happy influence toward diffusing the beams of divine light in a dark world, for the glory of our Redeemer, and the eternal salvation of souls. *Amen.*

Advertisement to Teachers. Together with the second edition of this book, the several catechisms are at the same time also printed in small books by themselves for the use of children according to their different ages. But it was thought proper before they were thus printed and more diffused in the world, to subject them once more to the careful examination of several worthy ministers; that no word nor phrase might be left in them which might create any difficulty to the understandings or consciences of children, or which might be offensive to any of their parents or teachers; supposing that they hold the common chief protestant doctrines which are generally professed amongst us, though they may differ in their opinion in lesser things. This is the reason why some few expressions are altered and made plainer, and I hope my readers will agree that they are every where changed for the better, and that there will be no occasion for any more changes in any following edition. Yet if any persons dislike a word or phrase, they may put another in the room of it.

Advertisement to Learners. If any persons, younger or elder, have a mind to pass a right judgment how far any of these catechisms may be necessary or useful to themselves, let them ask themselves the questions while they hide the answer from their eyes; or let two of them ask each other the questions by turns, and then it will appear they have need to learn the answer of these catechisms wheresoever they are not able to give a tolerable answer of themselves.

THE

YOUNG CHILD'S CATECHISM.

THE PREFACE.

THE most general and the plainest principles of the christian religion are contracted into so short a form in this First Catechism, that they may be easily learned by heart by a child of moderate capacity at four or five years old: Where the understanding appears more bright and early the child may begin sooner. By this means young creatures may treasure up a brief scheme of religion in their memory sufficient for their own knowledge and practice at that age. The questions and answers are ranged in such order as may let the things of God into their tender minds in the easiest manner; and for this purpose they are described in the most obvious and familiar words and phrases.

Notwithstanding all the care that is taken in composing a catechism in the plainest language, yet it may cost the teacher some little pains to make the young child understand every word of it. But it is necessary the child should have some notion of the meaning of every answer before he proceeds to the next question, because every following question depends upon some former answer: And parents and teachers should use their utmost skill in leading the child into the meaning of every question when they ask it, and of every answer when the child repeats it, that the child may not hear and learn mere words and syllables instead of the great things of God and religion. Surely a child of four or five years old may easily learn one answer in the First Catechism every week; and since there are but four and twenty questions in it, he may finish it in five or six months time; and he may grow very perfect both in the words and meaning by repeating it constantly once or twice every week till he be seven years old. If the young child can read before he has learned this catechism by heart, it may be useful for him to read it all over by way of lesson at the reading school every week while he is learning it, that he may take in the meaning of it the better, and that the answer may become familiar and easy to him.

When he can say the First Catechism perfectly, he may once in a month at least read over the Second till he be six or seven years old, and begins to commit it to memory: And by this means perhaps he may be allured to get it by heart long before his teachers require it of him.

It was not thought necessary to add the texts of scripture to support and prove the answers of this First short Catechism, as it is done in the Second; because the child who learns it, is supposed to be rather too young, to compare the catechism with all those scriptures, and to discern the conformity between them: Besides, it would take up too much time to employ a young child in learning all those scriptures, and withhold him too long from the Second Catechism. Yet it may not be amiss for the child sometimes when he reads over the Second Catechism, to read also the scriptures that stand as proofs of it; and this may be done even before he begins to learn it by heart as well as afterward; for these scriptures are such as contain the chief and most important principles of the christian religion, and therefore he should be acquainted with them betimes. And let children have early notice given them, that though such catechisms are composed by men, for the easier conveyance of the knowledge of divine things into the minds of children, yet they are or should be all taken out of *the word of God, for it is the word of God, and not the words of men, which must be the foundation and rule of their belief and their practice.*

THE

FIRST CATECHISM:

OR,

THE CATECHISM FOR A YOUNG CHILD,

TO BE BEGUN

AT THREE OR FOUR YEARS OLD.

I QUESTION.

CAN you tell me, child, who made you?

Answer. The great God who made heaven and earth.

2 *Q.* What doth God do for you?

A. He keeps me from harm by night and by day, and is always doing me good.

3 *Q.* And what must you do for this great God who is so good to you?

A. I must learn to know him first, and then I must do every thing to please him.

4 *Q.* Where doth God teach us to know him and to please him?

A. In his holy word, which is contained in the Bible.

5 *Q.* Have you learned to know who God is?

A. God is a Spirit; and though we cannot see him, yet he sees and knows all things, and he can do all things.

6 *Q.* What must you do to please God?

A. I must do my duty both toward God and toward man.

7 *Q.* What is your duty to God?

A. My duty to God is to fear and honour him, to love and serve him, to pray to him, and to praise him.

8 *Q.* What is your duty to man?

A. My duty to man is to obey my parents, to speak the truth always, and to be honest and kind to all.

9 *Q.* What good do you hope for by seeking to please God?

A. Then I shall be a child of God, and have God for my father and my friend for ever.

10 *Q.* And what if you do not fear God, nor love him, nor seek to please him?

A. Then I shall be a wicked child, and the great God will be very angry with me.

11 *Q.* Why are you afraid of God's anger?

A. Because he can kill my body, and he can make my soul miserable after my body is dead.

12 *Q.* But have you never done any thing to make God angry with you already?

A. Yes, I fear I have too often sinned against God, and deserved his anger.

13 *Q.* What do you mean by sinning against God?

A. To sin against God is to do any thing that God forbids me, or not to do what God commands me.

14 *Q.* And what must you do to be saved from the anger of God which your sins have deserved?

A. I must be sorry for my sins, I must pray to God to forgive me what is past, and serve him better for time to come.

15 *Q.* Will God forgive you if you pray for it?

A. I hope he will forgive me, if I trust in his mercy, for the sake of what Jesus Christ has done, and what he has suffered.

16 *Q.* Do you know who Jesus Christ is?

A. He is God's own Son, who came down from heaven to save us from our sins, and from God's anger.

17 *Q.* What has Christ done toward the saving of men?

A. He obeyed the law of God himself, and has taught us to obey it also.

18 *Q.* And what has Christ suffered in order to save men?

A. He died for sinners who have broke the law of God, and had deserved to die themselves.

19 *Q.* Where is Jesus Christ now?

A. He is alive again, and gone to heaven to provide a place there, for all that serve God and love his Son Jesus.

20 *Q.* Can you of yourself love and serve God and Christ?

A. No, I cannot do it of myself, but God will help me by his own Spirit if I ask him for it.

21 *Q.* Will Jesus Christ ever come again?

A. Christ will come again, and call me and all the world to account for what we have done.

22 *Q.* For what purpose is this account to be given?

A. That the children of God, as well as the wicked, may all receive according to their works.

23 *Q.* What must become of you if you are wicked?

A. If I am wicked, I shall be sent down to everlasting fire in hell, among wicked and miserable creatures.

24 *Q.* And whither shall you go if you are a child of God?

A. If I am a child of God, I shall be taken up to heaven, and dwell there with God and Christ for ever. *Amen.*

THE

CHILD'S CATECHISM.

THE PREFACE.

IN the age of childhood, at every three or four years of life, the understanding seems to make a more sensible progress and more visible improvement, than it does perhaps in any three years afterwards, especially if it be assisted by the advantage of good education: And the reason is, because every thing is new to us in that early age. At seven or eight years old, therefore, the child may be capable of understanding and learning this second composure, which I call "The Child's Catechism." It is a scheme of the christian religion, drawn up much in the same form and method as the former; but it is much enlarged, and comprehends many more particulars both of doctrine and duty.

When the child begins to learn the Second Catechism, he should by no means lay aside the First, but be kept to repeat it once in a month, till he has learned the Second quite through, and can say them both perfectly by heart. Let the child learn the Second Catechism throughout, first without the scriptures, and by that time he is perfect in it, he will be perhaps ten years old or more: Then if the teacher please, let the child begin to learn the scriptures which are set down as proofs under every answer: For at this age, he may be capable of seeing the conformity or agreement, between the answer in his catechism, and the text of scripture which is brought to prove it.

In catechising him upon the scriptures, it is not so proper a method to bid him repeat all the proofs together under each answer: But take the answer into pieces, and enquire of him particularly, which scripture proves this part of the answer, and what scripture proves the next part, and so onward. This will not only give a great relief to the child's memory, but it will much more improve his reason and understanding in religion; and it will help to confirm and establish him in that important truth, *that not the composures of men, but the scripture itself, is the rule of our religion.*

For children who have weaker memories, or less leisure and advantage for learning, I do not advise that they should be confined to learn all the scriptures that belong to this catechism, before they proceed to the Assembly's. Parents and teachers should judge in this matter, and determine the lessons and labours of children, according to their

different capacities: For as some children grow in bodily stature much faster than others, and they must have new garments more frequently, because they have outgrown the old, so in the improvements of the mind some children far exceed others; and those who are of the slowest growth, must dwell longer on their former lessons and catechisms, before they proceed to change them for new ones: And sometimes they must be indulged to skip over some lessons, which those who make swifter progress, may learn for their greater profit.

It may be complained indeed, that this Second Catechism itself is rather too large for the child at seven or eight years old, for it contains in it seventy-four questions, whereas that of the Assembly's, which is proposed to youth of twelve or thirteen years old, contains but one hundred and seven. But let it be observed that the answers are generally shorter, and the words much easier to be understood and remembered: And to make the matter still more unexceptionable, there is a line drawn all along in the margin, by those questions and answers, which may be omitted in teaching children of seven or eight years old, and these amount to twenty-four: This will reduce the Catechism for that age to fifty questions. Then when they arrive at nine or ten years of age, they may learn the answers which were before omitted, and so become masters of the whole.

If this method be followed there will be, as it were, three catechisms for three stages of childhood, each exceeding the other in length, in a more exact proportion to the growing years and memories of children, till at twelve or thirteen years they are prepared to learn the Assembly's Catechism with greater improvement. But in this and all other methods of instruction which relate to children, much of the management and pratice must be left to the discretion and care of those who teach them, and all must be committed to the grace and blessing of God. *Amen.*

THE

SECOND CATECHISM;

OR,

THE CATECHISM FOR CHILDREN,

WHICH THEY MAY BEGIN AT SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS OLD,

ACCORDING TO THEIR DIFFERENT CAPACITIES.

---

1 QUESTION.

DEAR child, do you know what you are?

Answer. I am a creature of God, for he made me both body and soul.

" *Isaiah* xlv. 11, 12. Thus saith the Lord—I have made the earth, and created man upon it. *Job* x. 11. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews. *Zech.* xii. 1. The Lord—who formeth the spirit of man within him."

2 *Q.* How do you know you have a soul?

A. Because I find something within me that can think and know, can wish and desire, can rejoice and be sorry, which my body cannot do.

" *Job* xxxii. 8. There is a spirit in man. *Job* xxxv. 11. Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven. *Prov.* xxiii. 7. As he thinketh in his heart, so is he. *Prov.* ii. 10. Knowledge is pleasant to thy soul. *Isaiah* xxvi. 8. The desire of our soul is to thy name. *Psalm* xxxv. 9. My soul shall be joyful in the Lord. *Matt.* xxvi. 38. My soul is exceeding sorrowful."

3 *Q.* Wherein doth your soul differ further from your body?

A. My body is made of flesh and blood, and it will die; but my soul is a spirit, and it will live after my body is dead.

See answer 1. " *Luke* xxiv. 39. A spirit hath not flesh and bones. *Job* xxxiv. 14, 15. If he gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall return again to dust. *Eccles.* xii. 7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit—to God who gave it. *Matt.* x. 28. Fear not them who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."

4. *Q.* For what purpose did God make you such a creature with a body and a soul?

A. To know him and serve him here on earth, that I may dwell with him and be happy hereafter in heaven.

What is written *Isaiah* xliii. 21. may be applied to all mankind, *viz.* " This people have I formed for myself, they shall, or should, shew forth my praise. *Psalm* lxxiii. 24.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. *Psalm* xvi. 11. In thy presence is fulness of joy."

5 *Q.* How must you learn to know God and serve him?

A. By the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are the word of God.

" 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,—for instruction in righteousness. *Luke* xvi. 29. They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 2 *Peter* iii. 2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise to salvation."

6 *Q.* What do the scriptures teach you of the knowledge of God?

A. The scriptures teach me what God is in himself and what he is in relation to us who are his creatures.

See the scriptures under the two following questions:

7 *Q* Who is God, considered in himself, or in his own nature?

A. God in his own nature is a Spirit, every where present, without beginning, and without end, most wise and powerful, most holy and merciful, most just and true.

" *John* iv. 24. God is a Spirit. *Jer.* xxiii. 24. Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth? *Psalm* xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God. *Rom.* xvi. 27. To God only wise be glory. *Rev.* iv. 8. Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. *Isaiah* vi. 3. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious. *Deut.* xxxii. 4. A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

8 *Q.* What is God in relation to us who are his creatures?

A. As the great God is our Maker who gave us our being, so he continually preserves us and does us good: He is our Lord and Ruler now, and he will be our Judge at last.

" *Psalm* c. 3. Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he who hath made us, and not we ourselves. *Psalm* xxxvi. 6. O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. *Psalm* cxix. 68. Thou art good and doest good. *Psalm* ciii. 19. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens,—his kingdom ruleth over all. *Psalm* l. 6. God is Judge himself."

9 *Q.* And how do the scriptures teach you to serve God?

A. I must serve God by keeping all his commandments, that is, by doing every thing that he requires of me, and avoiding every thing that he forbids me.

" *Deut.* x. 12, 13. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee?—To keep the commandments of the Lord. *Exod.* xxiv. 3. All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. *Psalm* cxix. 101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word."

10 *Q.* What commandments has God given to men?

A. He gave the law of ten commandments to the Jews in the Old Testament, and they are summed up in two commandments for us in the New Testament.

" *Deut.* x. 4. And he wrote on the tables [of stone] the ten commandments which the Lord spake unto you in the mount. *Matt.* xxii. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." See Question 21.

11 *Q.* Repeat the ten commandments of God in short, which he gave in the Old Testament.* What is the first commandment?

A. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

12 *Q.* What is the second commandment?

A. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, to bow down and worship it.

13 *Q.* What is the third commandment?

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

14 *Q.* What is the fourth commandment?

A. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.

15 *Q.* What is the fifth commandment?

A. Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long.

16 *Q.* What is the sixth commandment?

A. Thou shalt do no murder.

17 *Q.* What is the seventh commandment?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

18 *Q.* What is the eighth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not steal.

19 *Q.* What is the ninth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

20 *Q.* What is the tenth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's.

See all these commandments at large in the twentieth chapter of *Exodus*, from the first verse to the eighteenth.

21 *Q.* What is the sum of these ten commandments which is given us in the New Testament?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.†

"*Matt.* xxii. 37, 38, 39. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment: And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

22 *Q.* What do you mean by loving God with all your heart?

A. To love God with all my heart is to have the highest and best thoughts of him, to desire his favour above all things, and delight to please him always.

* It is thought more proper in a catechism for children to give the ten commandments in short, and not to write them down here in full length, which is not so needful for children, and would burden their memories. Christ himself and St. Paul have done the same thing, when they rehearsed several of these commands. See *Matt.* xix. 18. and *Rom.* xiii. 9.

Note, A particular account of what is required and what is forbidden in these commandments may be seen in the Assembly's Catechism.

† The nine following questions and answers are employed in duties and sins relating to God and man, because this matter comes more within the knowledge and practice in children: Perhaps this account may be thought too long by some persons in so short a catechism. To others it may not seem so complete and particular as they might expect, because the repetition of those particulars, which are plainly and clearly expressed in the very words of the ten commandments, is avoided here. Repetitions of the same thing are not needful in such a compendium, or short view of religion.

" *Nehem.* ix. 5. Thy glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise. *Psalm* lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. *Psalm* lxiii. 3. Thy loving-kindness is better than life. *Psalm* xl. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart."

23 *Q.* How must you shew your love to God?

A. By these three things:

1. By paying him constantly the worship that he requires of me.

2. By doing heartily whatsoever else he commands me.

3. By bearing patiently what he suffers to befal me.

Note, Wheresoever the answer is divided into parts by figures 1, 2, 3, the teacher may repeat the question at every figure, and thus make the child's answer more easy. As, *Q.* What is the first thing whereby you must shew your love to God? *Q.* What is the second thing, &c.

" 1. *Deut.* vi. 13. and *Matt.* iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. *Psalm* v. 7. In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

" 2. *Exod.* xxxiv. 11. Observe thou that which I command thee. *Psalm* cxix. 34. I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

" 3. *Rom.* xii. 12.——Patient in tribulation. *Micah* vii. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him."

24 *Q.* What worship doth God require of you?

A. I must hearken diligently to his holy word, and praise him for his greatness and goodness; I must pray to him daily for what mercies I want, and give him thanks for what I receive.

" *Deut.* xxviii. 1. If thou shalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God—he will set thee on high. *Psalm* lxxxv. 8. I will hear what God the Lord will speak. *Psalm* cxlv. 3. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. *Psalm* cxxxv. 3. Praise ye the Lord, for he is good. *Col.* iv. 2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. *Psalm* lv. 17. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray. *Psalm* cxviii. 1. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. *Eph.* v. 20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God."

25 *Q.* And what do you mean by loving your neighbour as yourself?

A. To love my neighbour as myself is to do to all other persons, as I could reasonably desire them to do to me if I were in their place?

" *Matt.* vii. 12. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

26 *Q.* How must you shew your love to your neighbour?

A. These three ways:

1. By honouring and obeying those that are set over me.

2. By speaking the truth, and dealing honestly with all who are about me.

3. By wishing well and doing good to all mankind, whether they be friends, strangers, or enemies.

See the note at *Q.* 23.

" 1. *Rom.* xiii. 1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. *Heb.* xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you.

" 2. *Eph.* iv. 25. Let every man speak truth with his neighbour. *Rom.* xiii. 7. Render to all their dues. *Rom.* xii. 17. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

"3. *Verse* 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another. *Gal.* vi. 10. Let us do good to all men, especially to the household of faith. 1 *Peter* ii. 17. Love the brotherhood. *Deut.* x. 19. Love ye the stranger. *Matt.* v. 44. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."

27 *Q.* You have told me the duties you must do; can you tell me also the sins that you must avoid?

A. I must avoid all the sins of the heart, the sins of the tongue, and the sinful actions of life.

" *Prov.* iv. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence. *Matt.* xv. 19. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts. *Psalm* xxxiv. 13. Keep thy tongue from evil. *Verse* 14. Depart from evil and do good. *Col.* iii. 9. Ye have put off the old man, that is, sinful nature, with his deeds."

28 *Q.* What are the sins of the heart?*

A. The sins of the heart are these, a neglect of God, pride and stubbornness, malice and envy, with all other evil thoughts and unruly passions.

" *Psalm* x. 4. The wicked will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts. *Prov.* xvi. 5. Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. *Jer.* vii. 24. They walked in the imagination [margin, stubbornness] of their evil heart. *Eph.* iv. 31. Let all bitterness and wrath—be put away from you, with all malice. *Gal.* v. 26. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory—envying one another. *Matt.* xv. 19. Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts. *Gal.* v. 24. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections, or passions, and lusts. *Matt.* v. 22. Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment."

29 *Q.* What are the chief sins of the tongue?

A. The chief sins of the tongue are swearing and cursing, abusing the name of God or any thing that is holy, scoffing and calling ill names, lying and filthy speaking.

" *James* v. 12. Above all things, my brethren, swear not. *Rom.* xii. 14. Bless, and curse not. *Lev.* xix. 12. Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God. 2 *Peter* iii. 3. Scoffers, walking after their own lusts. *Prov.* xix. 29. Judgments are prepared for scorners. *Matt.* v. 22. Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. 1 *Peter* iii. 9. Not rendering railing for railing. *Col.* iii. 8. Put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth: Lie not one to another."

30 *Q.* What are those sinful actions which you must avoid?

A. Sinful actions are such as these, gluttony, drunkenness and quarrelling, wanton carriage and mispending of time, especially the Lord's-day, doing dishonour to God or injury to man.

" *Luke* xxi. 34. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness. *James* iv. 1. Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not from your lusts? 1 *Thess.* iv. 11. Study to be quiet, and to do your own business. *Rom.* xii. 11. Not slothful in business. *Rom.* xiii. 13. Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness. *Rom.* ii. 23. Through

* It would have been too tedious and improper here to enumerate every particular sin of heart, lip and life. Such only are mentioned as children may understand, and of which children are sometimes guilty. See a larger account in the " Preservative from Sin and Folly."

breaking the law thou dishonourest God. *Rom.* xiii. 9, 10. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour."

31 *Q.* Have you never broke the commands of God, and sinned against him?

A. My own heart and conscience tell me, that I have broke God's holy commandments, and sinned against him both in thought, word, and deed.

" *Prov.* xx. 9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? *James* iii. 2. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. In many things we offend all. *Eccles.* vii. 20. There is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not."

32 *Q.* How do you know that you have sinned in thought, word, and deed against the blessed God?

A. I have let evil thoughts run too much in my mind, and spoken too many evil words. I have too often done such deeds as are evil, and neglected what is good. See the scriptures under the former question.

33 *Q.* Whence comes it to pass that you have been such a sinner?

A. I was born into the world with inclinations to that which is evil, and I have too much followed these inclinations all my life.

" *Psalm* li. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. *Gen.* viii. 21. The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. *Ephes.* ii. 3. We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others."

34 *Q.* How came you to be born with such inclinations to evil?

A. All mankind are born in sin, because they come from Adam, the first man, who sinned against God.

" *Job.* xiv. 4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. *Job.* xv. 14. What is man, that he should be clean; or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? *Rom.* v. 12. By one man sin entered into the world. *Verse* 19. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

No more of original sin is expressed in this catechism than almost all christians acknowledge; nor indeed are children well capable of taking in any deeper accounts of this doctrine.

35 *Q.* But why did you follow these evil inclinations? Was it not your duty to resist them when you knew they were evil?

A. I ought to resist every sinful inclination, and therefore I have no sufficient excuse for myself before the great God.

" *Rom.* vi. 12. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. *Rom.* i. 20, 21. They are without excuse, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations. *Rom.* iii. 19. Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

36 *Q.* What do you deserve because of your sins?

A. My sins have deserved the wrath and curse of the Almighty God who made me.

" *Ephes.* v. 6. Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. *Gal.* iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. *Isaiah* xxvii. 11. He that made them will not have mercy on them."

Note, The curse of God falling on man for sin is, when the great God solemnly gives up or appoints a person to suffer pain, shame, or death, or all these together on the account of sin.

37 *Q.* Is the wrath of God so terrible that you cannot bear it?

A. The wrath of God is terrible indeed, for he can make sinners suffer all the miseries of this life, the pains of death, and the torments of hell for ever.

"*Nahum* i. 6. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? *Rom.* i. 32. The judgment of God is, that they which commit such things are worthy of death. *Luke* xii. 5. Fear him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell. *Mark* ix. 45. Into the fire that never shall be quenched."

38 *Q.* How do you hope to escape God's wrath, which your sins have deserved?

A. God is merciful, and has sent Jesus Christ into this world, to become the Saviour of sinful creatures, as the gospel teaches us.

"*John* iii. 17. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. *Matt.* i. 21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. 1 *Thess.* i. 10. Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come. 1 *Tim.* i. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

39 *Q.* What is the gospel?

A. The gospel is the glad tidings of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, which was foretold in the Old Testament, but is plainly revealed in the New.

"*Gal.* iii. 8. The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed, that is, *verse* 16. in thy seed, which is Christ. *Luke* ii. 10. I bring you good tidings of great joy—for unto you is born this day—a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. See 1 *Cor.* xv. 1, 3, 4. *Rom.* iii. 21, 22. *Mark* xvi. 15, 16."

40 *Q.* Who is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who was with God before the world was made, but he became the Son of Man, and dwelt with men about seventeen hundred years ago.

"*John* x. 36. I said, I am the Son of God. *John* xvii. 5. Now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. *John* i. 1, 14. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God—and the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. *John* v. 27. He is the Son of Man."

41 *Q.* But is not Jesus Christ God as well as man?

A. Though he be a man yet he is God also, for he is a glorious person, in whom God and man are joined together, and his name is *Emmanuel*, or God with us.

"*John* i. 1. The word was with God, and the word was God. 1 *Tim.* ii. 5. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. *Col.* ii. 9. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. *Rom.* ix. 5. Who is over all, God blessed for ever. *Matt.* i. 23. A virgin—shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted, is, God with us. 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. God was manifested in the flesh."

42 *Q.* What did Jesus Christ do on earth in order to save sinners?

A. He did three things:

1. He made known to men the will of God by his preaching.
2. He set them a pattern of holiness by his own practice.
3. He obtained pardon of sin and everlasting life for them by his obedience unto death.

Note, as before in questions 23, 26. Wheresoever the answer is divided into parts by figures, 1, 2, 3, the teacher may repeat the question at every figure, and thus make the child's answer more easy, as *Q.* What is the first thing that Christ did? &c. *Q.* What is the second thing? &c.

" 1. *Isaiah* lxi. 1. The Lord hath appointed me to preach good tidings, that is, the gospel. *John* xv. 15. All things that I have heard of my Father, have I made known unto you.

" 2. *John* xiii. 15. I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. 1 *Peter* ii. 21. Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.

" 3. *Phil.* ii. 8. He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. *Rom.* v. 19. By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. *Heb.* ix. 12. By his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 1 *John* i. 7, 9. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins—and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

43 *Q.* How could Christ obtain pardon and life for us by his doing or suffering?

A. Our sins had deserved death, but Christ was the Son of God, and perfectly righteous, and God appointed him to suffer death to take away our sins, and to bring us into his favour.

" *Rom.* vi. 23. The wages of sin is death. 1 *Peter* iii. 18. Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. 2 *Cor.* v. 21. He that knew no sin was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin. 1 *Cor.* xv. 3. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. 1 *John* ii. 2. Jesus Christ the righteous—he is the propitiation for our sins. 1 *John* iii. 5. He was manifested to take away our sins. *Rom.* v. 10. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

44 *Q.* Is Jesus Christ now among the dead?

A. No, he arose from the dead on the third day, and afterward went up to heaven to dwell at the right hand of God.

" 1 *Cor.* xv. 4. He was buried, and he rose again the third day. *Eph.* i. 20. God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places."

45 *Q.* What is Christ now doing in heaven?

A. He pleads with God his Father to bestow mercy on men, and he rules over all things for the good of his people.

" *Isaiah* liii. 12. He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. 1 *John* ii. 1. If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous. *Eph.* i. 17, 22. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ—gave him to be head over all things to the church. *Acts* x. 36. He is Lord of all."

46 *Q.* What must you do to become one of his people, and to partake of this mercy?

A. I must repent of my sins, and confess them before God, and ask pardon for them; I must have faith in Christ as my Saviour, and obey him as my Lord and Ruler.

" *Acts* viii. 22. Repent of thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. *Prov.* xxviii. 13. Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. *Luke* xi. 4. Forgive us our sins. *Acts* xvi. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. *Acts* v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. *Heb.* v. 9. He became the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."

47 *Q.* What is it to repent of sin?

A. To repent of my sins is to be sorry at my heart that I have offended God, to hate every thing that displeases him, and to take heed that I offend him no more.

" *Psalm* xxxviii. 18. I will be sorry for my sin. 2 *Cor.* vii. 10. Godly sorrow worketh repentance. *Psalm* cxix. 104. I hate every false way. *Job* xxxiv. 32. If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more."

48 *Q.* What is it to have faith in Christ as your Saviour?

A. To have faith in Christ as my Saviour is, to believe that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, and to give myself up to him, and to trust in him that he may save me in his own way.

" *Acts* viii. 37. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 1 *Tim.* i. 15. with 2 *Tim.* i. 12. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation—Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I know whom I have believed, or trusted, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him. 2 *Cor.* viii. 5. They gave up their own selves to the Lord."

49 *Q.* What reason have you to hope that you shall then be delivered from the anger of God?

A. If we repent of sin and trust in Christ, God hath told us in his word that he will forgive our sins and save our souls.

" *Acts* iii. 19. Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out. *Acts* x. 43. Whosoever believeth, or trusteth, in him shall receive remission of sins. *Acts* xvi. 31. Believe on, or trust in, the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

50 *Q.* But is not your heart itself sinful, and have you power of yourself to repent of sin, and to trust in Christ and obey him?

A. We have sinful hearts and cannot do these duties of ourselves, but God has promised his own Holy Spirit if we pray for it, to renew our hearts to holiness, and help us to do his will.

" 2 *Cor.* iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. *Eph.* ii. 8. By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. *Luke* xi. 13. How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you. *Verse* 27. And I will put my Spirit within you. *Verse* 37. I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. *Rom.* xii. 2. Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. *Tit.* iii. 5. He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. *Rom.* viii. 26. The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

51 *Q.* How must you offer up your prayers so as to be accepted of God, and obtain his Holy Spirit or any blessings from him?

A. In all our prayers and all our services, we must seek for acceptance only from the mercy of God and for the sake of Christ; for we have sinned and deserve no good thing.

" *Dan.* ix. 15, 17, 18. We have sinned, we have done wickedly—O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant—for the Lord's sake—We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. *Eph.* i. 6. He hath made us accepted in the beloved. *John* xvi. 23. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you. *Verse* 24. Ask and ye shall receive."

52 *Q.* Hath God provided any other means for our help in the way to heaven?

A. God hath given his holy word both to Jews and christians, he hath sent his ministers to help us to understand his word, and appointed some special signs and tokens of his mercy for our use.

" *Psalm* cxlvii. 19. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. *John* xvii. 14. I have given them thy word. *Mal.* ii. 7. The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. *Nehem.* viii. 7. The levites caused the people to understand the law. *Eph.* iv. 11. He, that is, Christ, gave—pastors and teachers—for the work of the ministry, &c. *Gen.* xvii. 11. It shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. *Rom.* iv. 11. He received the sign of circumcision. *Matt.* xxviii. 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

53 *Q.* What are the special signs and tokens which God hath appointed to shew forth his mercy among christians?

A. There are two signs or tokens which are commonly called sacraments of the New Testament, and these are baptism and the Lord's-supper.

" *Matt.* xxviii. 19. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them. 1 *Cor.* xi. 20. The Lord's-supper. *Verse* 24. This do in remembrance of me."

54 *Q.* What is baptism?

A. It is a washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

" *Matt.* xxviii. 19. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

55 *Q.* What is meant by this washing?

A. It signifies our being cleansed from sin, and our becoming new creatures, and the disciples of Christ.

" *Acts* xxii. 16. Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. *Tit.* iii. 5. The washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. *Gal.* iii. 27. As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, that is, are his disciples."

56 *Q.* Why must we be baptized in the name of the Father?

A. Because it was God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who appointed this salvation, and he is our Father also if we are true christians.

" *Eph.* i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings. *John* xx. 17. I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. 2 *John* 9. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son."

57 *Q.* Why must we be baptized in the name of the Son of God?

A. Because this salvation was preached by the Son of God as our great Prophet, he procured it for us as our High-Priest, and he bestows it on us as our Lord and King.

" *Acts* iii. 22. A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up to you like unto me. *Luke* iv. 18. The Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. *Heb.* ii. 17. That he might be a merciful and a faithful High-Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. *Acts* v. 31. God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin."

58 *Q.* Why must it be done also in the name of the Holy Spirit?

A. Because the wondrous works of the Holy Spirit bare witness to this salvation here-

tofore, and it is this Holy Spirit enables us to obey the gospel now, and to hope and wait for this salvation.

" *Heb.* ii. 4. God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders—and gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 *Pet.* i. 22. Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit. *Gal.* v. 5. We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

59 *Q.* What doth this baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit oblige you to do?

A. If I am baptized I am given up to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that I may live as a new creature and a christian; and having been once washed I must not defile myself again with sin.

" *Rom.* vi. 2, 3. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?—We were baptized into Jesus Christ. *Verse* 4. We should walk in newness of life. 2 *Cor.* v. 17. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. 2 *Peter* ii. 20, 22. Those who profess christianity and return again to sin, are compared to the sow that was washed and returns to her wallowing in the mire."

60 *Q.* What is the Lord's-supper?

A. It is the eating of bread and drinking of wine in remembrance of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

" 1 *Cor.* xi. 24, 25, 26. This do in remembrance of me—As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come."

61 *Q.* What doth the bread signify?

A. The bread when it is broken signifies the body of Christ, which was wounded or broken on the cross for us.

" 1 *Cor.* xi. 23, 24. He took the bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, take eat, this is my body which is broken for you."

62 *Q.* What doth the wine signify?

A. The wine poured out into the cup signifies the blood of Christ, which was poured out in his death to take away our sins.

" *Matt.* xxvi. 27, 28. And he took the cup, that is, the cup of wine, or the fruit of the vine, as *verse* 29. and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

63 *Q.* Why must the bread be eaten, and the wine be drank?

A. To signify our partaking of the blessings which Christ hath obtained for us by his death.

" 1 *Cor.* x. 16, 17. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? We are all partakers of that one bread. And probably it is with reference to this sacrament which Christ designed to ordain in his church, that he represents our believing in him thus, in *John* vi. 54, 55. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life—for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

64 *Q.* What doth the Lord's-supper oblige us to?

A. Those who partake of the Lord's-supper should thankfully remember the love of Christ, who died for them, and they should love and serve him to the end of their life.

" *Luke* xxii. 19. This do in remembrance of me. *Gal.* ii. 20. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. *John* xxi. 15. Lord, thou

knowest that I love thee. *John* xiv. 15. If ye love me, keep my commandments. *Psalm* lvi. 12. Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praise unto thee."

65 *Q.* When you have done the will of God, and served Christ to the end of your life, what are your hopes after death?

A. When my body dies, and my soul goes into the world of spirits, I hope it shall dwell with God and Christ, and be happy.

" *Luke* xx. 37, 38. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: He is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him. *Luke* xvi. 20, 22. Lazarus died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. *Luke* xxiii. 46. Jesus dying, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. *Acts* vii. 55. Stephen looked up stedfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. *Verse* 59. And they stoned Stephen—saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. 2 *Cor.* v. 8. Absent from the body, and present with the Lord, that is, Christ; *Phil.* i. 23."

66 *Q.* And do you not expect some greater happiness afterward?

A. Yes, I hope for more complete happiness when my body shall rise again and be joined to my spirit at the day of judgment.

" 1 *Cor.* xv. 42, 43. So is the resurrection of the dead:—It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. *Rom.* viii. 23. We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body."

Since the scripture makes so frequent mention of angels and devils as instruments of Divine Providence; and since dwelling with angels or devils is our common description of heaven and hell, it was hardly proper to finish this catechism, without some account of these good and evil spirits; but it is placed at the very end, that children need not converse much about them till they are eight or nine years old: And then it is very fit they should be represented as being entirely under God's command and the government of Christ, that children may not be affrighted.

67 *Q.* But let us hear first, what is this world of spirits you talk of, whither the soul goes at death?

A. It is a very large world, though it is out of sight, in which there are different dwellings for angels and devils, and for the souls of men both good and bad.

" *Matt.* xxii. 30. The angels of God in heaven. 2 *Peter* ii. 4. Devils are said to be cast down to hell. *Heb.* xii. 23. The spirits of just men made perfect. 1 *Peter* iii. 19, 20. The spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient."

68 *Q.* Who or what are angels?

A. They are good spirits, who wait on God, and worship him in heaven, but they are often sent down to do service here on earth.

" *Matt.* xxii. 30. The angels of God in heaven. *Rev.* vii. 11. All the angels stood round the throne and worshipped God. *Psalm* ciii. 20. Bless the Lord ye his angels—that do his commandments. *Dan.* vi. 22. My God hath sent his angels, and shut the lions mouths that they have not hurt me."

69 *Q.* Who or what are devils?

A. They are evil spirits, who were at first angels of God, but having sinned against him they were cast out of heaven, and now they are always tempting men to sin.

" *Rev.* xii. 9. That great dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and satan, who deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. This text bears an allusion to their first sin and fall. 2 *Peter* ii. 4. God

spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell. 1 *Thess.* iii. 5. Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you. Even Christ himself was tempted of the devil; *Matt.* iv. 1. See 1 *Peter* v. 8."

70 *Q.* But are not all these spirits, both good and evil, put under the dominion of Christ?

A. Yes, Christ is Lord over them all: He employs the angels for the good of his people; and the devils can do no mischief but when Christ suffers them.

" 1 *Peter* iii. 22. Jesus Christ who is gone into heaven, angels, authorities and powers being made subject to him. *Acts* xii. 11. The Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me. *Heb.* i. 14. Are not they all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? *Luke* viii. 32. The devils besought him that he would suffer them to enter into the swine: And he suffered them."

71 *Q.* What will become of the devils at last?

A. They are now kept as prisoners for some greater punishment after the judgment day.

" *Eph.* iv. 8. He led captivity captive. *Jude* 6. Angels that kept not their first estate—are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness till the judgment of the great day. See *Rev.* xx. 10."

72 *Q.* When will this day of judgment come, when you said your body should rise from the dead?

A. At the end of the world Jesus Christ shall come down from heaven to judge all mankind; and for that purpose he shall raise all that are dead to life again.

" 1 *Peter* iv. 7. The end of all things is at hand. 1 *Thess.* iv. 16. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven. 2 *Tim.* iv. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing. *John* v. 28, 29. The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth. 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised."

73 *Q.* What shall be done to mankind when the dead are raised to life?

A. Christ shall call them all to appear before his seat of judgment, where both the righteous and the wicked must give an account to him of their behaviour in this world.

" *Matt.* xxv. 31, 32. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory—before him shall be gathered all nations. *Rom.* xiv. 10, 12. We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ—every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

74 *Q.* How will the righteous appear in that day?

A. The righteous shall appear with courage and joy as the children of God, who have done the will of their heavenly Father, and are made like him in holiness.

" 1 *John* iii. 10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God. 1 *John* ii. 29. Every one that doth righteousness is born of him. *Eph.* iv. 24. The new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 1 *John* iv. 17. We may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world."

75 *Q.* And how will the wicked appear then?

A. The wicked shall stand before the Judge with fear and shame, like children of the devil; for they have done his will, and are like him in sinful works.

" *Dan.* xii. 2. Some shall awake to everlasting shame, &c. *John* viii. 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. *Acts* xiii. 10. Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness."

76 *Q.* And how will Christ the Judge dispose of men and deal with them in judgment?

A. He will place the righteous at his right hand and the wicked on the left, and will pass a sentence on them both, according as their works have been.

"*Matt.* xxv. 32, 33. He shall separate them one from another—he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive—according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

77 *Q.* After the judgment what shall become of the wicked?

A. The wicked shall be driven into hell-fire both soul and body, to be tormented with the devil and wicked spirits for ever.

"*Matt.* xxv.41. Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. *Matt.* xiii. 42. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. *Rev.* xx. 10. And they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."

78 *Q.* And what shall be done to the righteous?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ shall carry the righteous up with him to heaven, both soul and body, to live there with God their Father, and with his holy angels in everlasting joy. *Amen.*

"*Matt.* xxv. 34. Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. 1 *Thess.* iv. 17. And so shall we ever be with the Lord, that is, Christ. *Heb.* xii. 22. Ye are come—to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable company of angels. After the judgment in *Rev.* xx. 11—15. it is said in *Rev.* xxi. 3, 4. God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death nor sorrow, crying nor pain," &c.

THE

ASSEMBLY'S SHORTER CATECHISM.

THE PREFACE.

IN the discourse which I have written concerning catechisms, and the best methods of composing them, I think it is made sufficiently evident that this catechism, framed by the Assembly of Divines, as comprehensive and as valuable as it is in itself, yet is by no means the fittest for the instruction of children in their youngest years; but I have here proposed it for the use of those that arrive at twelve or fourteen years of age, and who are supposed, by learning shorter and easier forms of instruction, to be better prepared to enter into the deep things of God, which are treated of in this catechism.

In copying it out I have not added the scriptures which are usually set to support every answer: This would have considerably enlarged the bulk of the book, and the book itself, with the proofs of scripture, is to be purchased any where at an easy rate. The Creed and the Lord's Prayer stand at the end of it: But there was no need to print the ten commandments over again, they being all so expressly contained in the catechism itself.

As for the explaining notes which are added at the end of most of the answers, I hope I have observed the rules which I proposed in my discourse of catechisms, and I need not repeat them here.

Some persons perhaps may think I have explained too many words, and those which were well enough known, such as chief end in the first question, and the like: But I have been informed of one child who was asked, What the chief end of man was, and he answered, His head; another being asked the same question, answered, Death; neither of them taking in the true idea or meaning of the words: And to avoid such mistakes, I have explained this and such like words here.

Others may imagine that many more words should have been explained which I have omitted, and the explications of all should have been larger and plainer; I grant it should be so, if I had designed them for young children of five, six, or seven years old; but then what a bulky catechism would this be for infants? Whereas, since I propose this catechism only to youth of twelve or fourteen, I hope the words which I have explained are sufficient for that age.

I would only take notice further, that though I have not thrown these explications of the words into questions and answers, yet when parents or teachers make use of it for the instruction of youth, it is a very easy matter for them to ask, What is such a thing? Or, What is the meaning of such and such a term, which is explained, and which is written in the Italic letter? And the child should make answer according to what is written in the Roman letter.

It is necessary also that I should add concerning this catechism what is said concerning the former, *viz.* that children should be put upon reading it often with these notes which explain the words, while they are learning the former catechisms by heart, and before they come to learn this as their appointed task. By this means they will know the meaning of many words which are used in scripture and in sermons more early, and understand their Bible the better, as well as be better prepared to commit this catechism to their memory when they have learned the others.

If the great God shall please to favour this small labour of mine in the exposition of this useful catechism, perhaps it may serve for the instruction of some fathers and mothers as well as children; and that at a smaller expence of the purchase, and much less labour of the memory, than any other exposition which I have either seen or read; and to this end I humbly entreat the divine blessing to attend it.

A

CATECHISM

PROPER FOR YOUTH AT TWELVE OR FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE,

COMPOSED BY

THE REVEREND ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES,

WITH THE

MORE DIFFICULT WORDS EXPLAINED UNDER EACH ANSWER.

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1 QUESTION.

WHAT is the chief end of man?

Answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Chief end. The chief design for which man was made, and which man should chiefly seek after.

To glorify God. To do him honour as the most glorious and most excellent Being.

To enjoy God. To rejoice in his presence and in his love.

2 *Q.* What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Scriptures. Holy writings.

Old and New Testament. The two parts of scripture, which might as properly be called the old and new covenant, or the law and the gospel.

3 *Q.* What do the scriptures principally teach?

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Principally. Chiefly.

4 *Q.* What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

A Spirit. A being that has understanding and will, but no shape nor parts, nor can be seen with the eyes.

Infinite. Without bounds.

Eternal. Without beginning or ending.

5 *Q.* Are there more gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and the true God.

6 *Q.* How many persons are there in the godhead?

A. There are three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Three persons in the godhead. Three to whom the personal terms, I, thou, and he, are applied, and yet the one, true godhead is ascribed to each of them.

7 *Q.* What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. Appointed to bring to pass all that is good, and to permit what is evil.

8 *Q.* How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Execute. Fulfil or bring to pass.

9 *Q.* What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

The word of his power. His powerful word.

10 *Q.* How did God create man?

A. God created man, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Male and female. Man and woman.

The image of God. Likeness to God.

11 *Q.* What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

12 *Q.* What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death.

Covenant of life upon condition of perfect obedience. A promise to bestow everlasting life if man continued to obey God perfectly without sinning.

Tree of knowledge of good and evil. A tree in the garden of Eden, so called, because by eating of it contrary to the command of God, Adam knew what good he had lost, and what evil he had brought upon himself.

13 *Q.* Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

14 *Q.* What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

Conformity to the law. Being and doing what the law requires.

Transgression of the law. Being or doing what the law forbids.

15 *Q.* What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

16 *Q.* Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

Covenant. See answer 12.

Posterity. Children and grandchildren, and all that proceed from them.

Descending from him by ordinary generation. Proceeding or coming from him according to the common course of nature.

17 *Q.* Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

The fall. Adam's sin is so called, because he fell from the favour of God, by falling from his obedience to him.

18 *Q.* Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Guilt of Adam's first sin. This must at least signify our interest in that sin, so far as to be justly exposed to pain and sorrow on the account of that sin.

Original righteousness. The good inclinations that belonged to man in his first estate as God created him.

Original sin. Evil inclinations which are born with every child of Adam since the fall.

Transgression. See answer 14.

19 *Q.* What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Communion with God. Friendly converse with him, or receiving blessings from him.

Curse of God. When a creature is devoted or given up to pain, or shame, or death, by God himself.

20 *Q.* Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer.

Eternity. Before time began.

Elected. Chose.

Covenant of grace. The merciful appointment or agreement of God to save men; called also, The new covenant, or the gospel.

Salvation. Deliverance of men from hell, and bringing them to heaven.

Redeemer. One that frees from bondage and misery by paying a price, or by an act of power.

21 *Q.* Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever.

God's elect. Those whom God has chosen for his own people.

Jesus. A Saviour.

Christ. Anointed or appointed of God.

22 *Q.* How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

23 *Q.* What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ as our Redeemer executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

The offices of Christ. The special works or businesses with God appointed him to perform.

Execute. See answer 8. Fulfil or perform.

Redeemer. See answer 20.

Humiliation and exaltation. See answers 27 and 28.

24 *Q.* How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

To reveal. To make known what was hidden.

Salvation. See answer 20.

25 *Q.* How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

A sacrifice. Some living creature slain, and offered up to God to answer for some offence committed against him.

To satisfy divine justice. To answer for the dishonour which the sin of man hath done to the authority and justice of God as a governor.

To reconcile. To make friends, to bring man into the favour of God again.

Intercession. Pleading or praying for another.

26 *Q.* How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Subduing us to himself. Bringing our souls to the obedience of Christ.

Note, I wish there had been something added here concerning Christ's office, as an example or pattern of holiness.

27 *Q.* Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

The cursed death of the cross. So called, because it is written, "Cursed is every one that is hanged on a tree;" *Gal.* iii. 13. *Deut.* xxi. 23. that is, Devoted to shame as well as to death.

28 *Q.* Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Sitting at the right hand of God. Having power and authority over all things given him by God the Father.

29 *Q.* How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Redemption. Deliverance from sin and misery.

Effectual application of the redemption of Christ. The powerful conveying of the benefits of this redemption to us.

30 *Q.* How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Faith. Trust in Christ, or receiving him as proposed to us in the gospel. See answer 86.

Uniting us to Christ. Making us one with Christ, as the head and members are one.

31 *Q.* What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

To convince us. To make us sensible.

Renewing our wills. Changing our old sinful inclinations, and giving us new and holy inclinations.

Embrace Jesus Christ. To receive him in all his offices as our prophet, our priest, and our king, &c.

Gospel. The covenant of grace, or the proposal of pardon and eternal life to sinners, or the promise of it to those who repent and believe in Christ.

32 *Q.* What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

To justify. To pardon sin, and receive a person into the favour of God as though he were righteous.
To adopt. To take one that is a stranger to be a son.
To sanctify. To make our sinful nature holy.
Benefits. Privileges, blessings.

33 *Q.* What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Free grace. Free and undeserved favour.
Imputed to us. Reckoned to our account and advantage.

34 *Q.* What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

35 *Q.* What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Whole man. Our thoughts, memory, will, affections, and all our faculties.
The image of God. That is, The likeness of his holiness.
To die unto sin. To forsake sin in heart and life.
To live unto righteousness. To follow after righteousness in heart and life.

36 *Q.* What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Conscience. That faculty of the soul whereby we pass a judgment concerning our good or evil actions.
Joy in the Holy Ghost. Holy rejoicing wrought in us by the Spirit of God.
Increase of grace. Growing in holiness.
Perseverance. Continuance.

37 *Q.* What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Glory. State of honour and happiness in heaven.
United to Christ. That is, As the members are reckoned one with the head.
The resurrection. Rising from the dead at the last day.

38 *Q.* What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Believers. Those who receive Christ in his offices, or trust in him as a prophet, a priest, and a king.
Acknowledged. Owned for the children of God.
Acquitted. Freed from all charges of sin.
Enjoy God. See answer 1.
To all eternity. Without end.

39 *Q.* What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

40 *Q.* What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

Moral law. The law which directs our manners, or our duty to God and man, and is a rule for all mankind.

41 *Q.* Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Summarily comprehended. Contained in short.

42 *Q.* What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

To love our neighbour as ourselves. To do to others as we think they ought to do to us in the like case.

43 *Q.* What is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Preface. One or more sentences which go before to bring in something else afterwards.

Egypt, the house of bondage. The land where the Israelites were made bondmen or slaves.

44 *Q.* What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, that because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Redeemer. See answer 20.

45 *Q.* Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

46 *Q.* What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know, and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

47 *Q.* What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God, and the giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Glorify God. See answer 1.

48 *Q.* What are we especially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

A. These words, "before me," in the first commandment, teach us, that God who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other god.

49 *Q.* Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Graven image. The likeness of any thing fashioned with a tool, in order to worship it.

Jealous. Highly concerned for his own honour.

Visiting the iniquities. Punishing the sins.

50 *Q.* What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word.

Ordinances. Appointments of God.

Pure. Without mixture of the inventions of men.

Entire. Without omitting any part of what God has appointed.

51 *Q.* What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Images. The resemblance of any thing made by engraving, painting, or carving, or casting in a mould, or any other way whatsoever.

52 *Q.* What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath for his own worship.

Annexed. Joined.

Sovereignty. Highest dominion and authority.

Propriety. Chief right to any thing, or special interest in it.

Zeal. Warm concern.

53 *Q.* Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Take God's name in vain. Use it in a trifling manner without seriousness.

Not hold him guiltless. Condemn and punish him.

54 *Q.* What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.

Reverend use. Using with holy fear.

Names of God. Such as, God, Lord, Jehovah, &c.

Titles of God. Such as, Lord of Hosts, Holy One of Israel, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Attributes. The perfections and properties of God: Such as, truth, holiness, goodness, &c.

Ordinances. See answer 50.

55 *Q.* What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.

Profaning or abusing. Using it for any trifling or sinful purposes, or casting any dishonour upon it.

56 *Q.* What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

57 *Q.* Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it."

Sabbath-day. The day of holy rest.

Hallowed. Sanctified or set apart for holy uses.

58 *Q.* What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.

59 *Q.* Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath, and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the christian sabbath.

Resurrection of Christ. His rising from the dead.

Christian sabbath. Day of rest for christians from worldly business and pleasure, and the day of the public worship of God through Christ.

60 *Q.* How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations, as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Sanctified. Used or spent in a holy manner.

Employment and recreation. Business and sport.

Works of necessity. Eating, drinking, taking care of health, feeding of cattle, &c.

Works of mercy. Doing kindness to the sick, the miserable, the helpless.

61 *Q.* What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission, or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works, about worldly employments and recreations.

Omission. The not performing.

Profaning. See answer 55.

62 *Q.* What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath-day.

Challenging. Laying claim to.

Propriety. See answer 52.

Blessing the sabbath. Appointing it to be a blessed time, or a day wherein men shall be blessed.

63 *Q.* Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Honour thy father and thy mother. Esteem, obey them, and maintain them if needful.

64 *Q.* What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honour, and performing the duties belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Superiors. Those who are above us, as parents, masters, rulers.

Inferiors. Those that are below us, as sons, daughters, servants.

Equals. Those that are of our own rank, as brothers, sisters, neighbours.

65 *Q.* What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing any thing against the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

Neglecting the honour. Not giving or not paying due respect.

66 *Q.* What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.

Prosperity. Happiness in this world, or the blessings of this life.

67 *Q.* Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is "Thou shalt not kill."

68 *Q.* What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

69 *Q.* What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, and whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Unjustly. Without just and good reason.

70 *Q.* Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

71 *Q.* What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own, and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

Chastity. Modesty, freedom from lust or sinful desire.

72 *Q.* What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words and actions.

Unchaste. Immodest, wanton, unclean.

73 *Q.* Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

74 *Q.* What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

75 *Q.* What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.

76 *Q.* Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

77 *Q.* What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Maintaining and promoting of truth. Preserving truth and carrying it on.

78 *Q.* What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.

Prejudicial, injurious. Hurtful.

79 *Q.* Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

Coveting. Sinful or unreasonable desire.

80 *Q.* What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his.

Contentment. A quiet and easy temper of mind in our own state.

Charitable. Loving or bearing good-will to another.

81 *Q.* What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.

Discontentment. A temper of mind unquiet or uneasy in our own state.

To envy. To be uneasy at another's welfare.

Inordinate motions and affections. Unreasonable and ungoverned desires and wishes.

82 *Q.* Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but daily doth break them in thought, word, and deed.

83 *Q.* Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Heinous. Hateful.

Aggravation. That which makes an offence more grievous and faulty.

84 *Q.* What doth every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.

Curse. See answer 19.

85 *Q.* What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means, whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Faith. See answer 30, and 86.

Repentance unto life. Such sorrow for sin, such hatred of it, and forsaking it, as is necessary to eternal life. See answer 87.

Communicate. Give or bestow.

Benefits of redemption. Blessings of the gospel procured by Christ. See answer 32.

86 *Q.* What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive, and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Saving grace. Principle or temper in the heart which is given us by the favour of God, and ends in the saving of the soul.

As he is offered to us in the gospel, that is, as a prophet, as a priest, as a king, as an example, &c.

87 *Q.* What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavours after new obedience.

Apprehension. Perceiving, knowing.

Mercy of God in Christ. Mercy which is promised to us, or which God bestows on us for the sake of Christ.

88 *Q.* What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Ordinances. See answer 50.

Sacraments. See answer 92.

Elect. See answer 20 and 21.

Effectual. Powerful.

89 *Q.* How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

To convince sinners. To make them know and believe their sin and danger, and the way of salvation.

Convert sinners. Turn their hearts to love God and trust in Christ.

Build them up. Make them increase.

90 *Q.* How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives.

Preparation. Endeavouring to put the heart in a right frame.

Faith. Belief.

91 *Q.* How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Virtue. Sufficient power.

Administer. Perform or distribute by way of office.

Blessing of Christ. Christ's powerful influence for our good.

92 *Q.* What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers.

Instituted. Appointed, commanded.

Sensible signs. Marks or tokens that are perceived by the senses, viz. seeing feeling, tasting.

New covenant. The covenant of grace, or the gospel.

Represented. Set forth in a lively manner as in a picture of resemblance.

Sealed. Confirmed and assured to us, as the possession of a house or land is made sure to a person by a seal set to a writing.

Applied. Conveyed or given.

Believers. Those who trust in Christ, or have faith in him.

93 *Q.* What are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's-supper.

New Testament. Gospel, or covenant of grace. See answer 2.

94 *Q.* What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Ingrafting into Christ. Our entrance into christianity, or union to Christ.

Benefits of the covenant of grace. See answer 32.

To be the Lord's. To be entirely given up to the service of Christ, and to his disposal.

95 *Q.* To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible church till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Administer. See answer 91.

Visible church. All that profess the true religion with their lips, and openly practise it in their life, are the members which make up the visible church.

It is called visible, because it is to be seen by men, whereas the invisible church is made up of those who have true religion in the heart, which God only knows and sees.

96 *Q.* What is the Lord's-supper?

A. The Lord's-supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Worthy receivers. Those who are fit to receive the Lord's-supper, and do receive it in a right manner.

Corporeal. Bodily.

Carnal. Fleshly.

Partakers of his body and blood. United to Christ, and partakers of the blessings procured by his death.

Spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. The soul's increase or improvement in holiness.

97 *Q.* What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's-supper?

A. It is required of them who would worthily partake of the Lord's-supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Worthily partake. Eat and drink of the bread and wine with a heart prepared for it.

To discern the Lord's body. To know and consider that the bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ.

To feed upon Christ by faith. To derive blessings from him by trusting in him.

Unworthily. Without any fit temper of mind.

Eat and drink judgment. Expose themselves to the displeasure of God by eating and drinking the bread and wine unworthily.

98 *Q.* What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

In the name of Christ. Hoping to obtain mercy for the sake of Christ.

99 *Q.* What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called, the Lord's-prayer.

Note, It were to be wished that the reverend authors had declared this form of prayer not to be so complete a pattern for christians in all ages, since Christ did not here teach his disciples to pray in his name, as he did afterward. See *John* xvi. 23, 24.

100 *Q.* What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, which is, "Our Father, which art in heaven," teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us, and that we should pray with and for others.

Preface. See answer 43.

Reverence and confidence. Fear and hope.

101 *Q.* What do you pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is, "Hallowed be thy name," we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Petition. Humble request.

Hallowed. Sanctified or honoured as becomes the name of God.

Glorifying God. See answer 1.

102 *Q.* What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, "Thy kingdom come," we pray, that Satan's

kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Satan's kingdom. The dominion or power of the devil over men.

Kingdom of grace. The merciful dominion or government of God and Christ among men.

Kingdom of glory. The dominion or government of God among saints in heaven, especially after the day of judgment.

103 *Q.* What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," we pray, that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

104 *Q.* What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

A competent portion. A sufficient share.

The blessing of God. The favour of God, which alone can make the creatures comfortable and useful to us.

105 *Q.* What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we pray, that God for Christ's sake would freely pardon all our sins: Which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

106 *Q.* What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Temptation. Any thing that entices or persuades us to sin, or that diverts or discourages us from our duty, or that becomes an occasion of our offending God.

Support and deliver, &c. Keep us from sinning when we are tempted to it.

107 *Q.* What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which is, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen," teacheth us to take encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to him; and in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

Conclusion. The close or end.

Ascribing. Acknowledging as due.

Testimony. Witness.

Amen. A wish and hope that it may be as we ask.

THE CREED.

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell,* the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right-hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR Father, which art in heaven: hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. *Amen.*

* His soul continued in the state of the dead, or separated from the body.

A PRESERVATIVE

FROM THE

SINS AND FOLLIES

OF

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH;

OR, A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE

SINS, VICES AND FRAILTIES, TO WHICH CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH ARE LIABLE, AND OF WHICH THEY SHOULD BE WARNED EARLY:

DRAWN UP IN THE WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER,

WITH ARGUMENTS AGAINST THEM TAKEN FROM REASON AND SCRIPTURE.

THE PREFACE.

THE most effectual way to teach children and youth to avoid any thing that is evil, is to represent it to them in a plain and lively manner, and that in particular instances; setting the sins, vices and follies before them in their hateful colours, and their dreadful consequences: And this may be done with better success, if we let them see how much these follies are contrary to reason, and that both reason and scripture join to forbid the same sins; but it was not possible to do this at large in any of the foregoing Catechisms: I have therefore attempted it in the following scheme, which is drawn up in a way of question for greater ease to the understanding and memory.

I do not call this a Catechism, because I do not propose it to be learned by heart; but if it be frequently read over by young persons, their teachers may bring them into an easy acquaintance with it, may give them warning of these vices, and impress the warning often on their consciences: Thus by the divine blessing it may become a happy preservative from many of the sins and frailties which are incident to mankind, especially in their younger parts of life.

A PRESERVATIVE, &c.

I QUESTION.

WHAT are the chief dangers that attend childhood and youth?

Answer. We are in danger of many sins; and there are many frailties and follies attend us in younger years.

2 *Q.* What is it that is most properly called sin?

A. Doing what God has forbidden, or neglecting to do what God hath required.

3 *Q.* What is it you call frailties and follies?

A. Those things which God hath not so plainly forbidden; but if they are indulged, will lead us into sinful practices, and are attended with many inconveniences.

Note, The word vice is sometimes used to signify sins, and sometimes follies.*

4 *Q.* How many sorts of sins are committed by mankind?

A. Our sins are of three sorts, *viz.* the sins of the heart, the sins of the tongue, and the sins of the life.

5 *Q.* Against whom are those sins committed?

A. Some more directly against God, some against our neighbours, and some against ourselves.

6 *Q.* But are not all sins committed against God?

A. Yes, we sin against God in all the evil that we do, because his law forbids it all: But in some sins we do more particular injury to our neighbours or ourselves.

7 *Q.* Are children and youth in danger of all these sorts of sin?

A. Yes, our natures being sinful, we children are in danger of these sins, as well as grown persons.

8 *Q.* What are the best ways to avoid these sins, and to free yourself from them?

A. I must do these six things:

1. I must endeavour to see the evil nature and ill consequences of every sin I am in danger of.

2. I must be sorry for what evil I have done in time past.

3. I must be more watchful for time to come.

4. I must pray to God to change my sinful nature, and to give me strength against these sins.

5. I must trust in Jesus Christ, and his grace to keep me from them.

6. I should have some good reason, and some proper scripture in my memory, always ready to oppose them.

Thus far of sins in general: Let us now come to particulars.

* Though it is sufficiently evident, that there are some fooleries or frailties of children which cannot properly be called sins, yet there are also some sins or follies, wherein it is hard to distinguish some of the kinds or branches of them from one another in their own natures. Nor is it easy to say under which head they should be ranked. The scripture often calls sin, folly; and if any of those which I have mentioned be ranked under an improper name, the candid reader will excuse it.

PART I.

OF SINS AGAINST GOD.

9 *Q.* What are the chief sins more directly against God, of which children are in danger?

A. Our sins against God may be ranked under these three heads, *viz.* ungodliness, profaneness, and self-sufficiency.*

10 *Q.* What is ungodliness?

A. To forget God continually, and have nothing to do with him: And it appears in four things.

11 *Q.* What is the first sign of ungodliness?

A. If I never honour nor praise God for his own greatness and glory.

Reason against this sinful neglect. The great and glorious God, who is our Maker, deserves our honour, and demands it of us, on account of his own excellencies manifested in all his works.

Scripture saith, "*Rom.* i. 20, 21. They are without excuse, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God."

12 *Q.* What is the second mark of ungodliness?

A. When I do not pray to God for the blessings which I want.

Reason for prayer to God. God is gracious, and will hear when we pray to him; but I have no reason to hope he will bless me, if I do not ask it of him, nor acknowledge any dependence on him.

Scripture. "*Psalm* lxv. 2. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. *Dan.* ix. 14. We made not our prayer before the Lord our God, therefore hath the Lord brought this evil upon us."

13 *Q.* What is the third sign of ungodliness?

A. When I do not give thanks to God for the mercies I receive.

Reason against unthankfulness. I may justly expect God will take away all the blessings he has bestowed, if I never thank him for them.

Scripture. "2 *Tim.* iii. 2. The unthankful are joined with the blasphemers and unholy. *Rom.* i. 20, 21. They are without excuse—because they were not thankful."

14 *Q.* What is the fourth mark of ungodliness?

A. When I do not hearken to the word of God, nor obey his commands.

Reason for hearkening to the word of God, and obeying his will. God who made me is my Owner, and my Governor, and my great Judge; and his word and will should be the rule of all my behaviour.

Scripture. "*Lev.* xxvi. 14, 16, 17. If ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments, I will appoint over you terror, and the consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume your eyes, and cause sorrow of heart, and I will set

* Ungodliness is a neglect of God; profaneness is an actual contempt of him: One is negative, or a sin of omission; the other is positive, and a sin of commission, as we may well distinguish them.

And perhaps some may think that a sinful self-sufficiency is implied in the neglect of God: But children must have every thing spoken in a plain and explicit manner to make them attend and remember it, and therefore I have made it a distinct head.

my face against you. *Psalm* lxxxi. 12. My people would not hearken to my voice, Israel would have none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts lust."

15 *Q.* Having heard your account of ungodliness, tell me now, what is profaneness?

A. Abusing or despising any thing that is holy, or that belongs to God.

16 *Q.* When may you be said to despise or abuse what belongs to God?

A. Four ways.

17 *Q.* What is the first instance of profaneness?

A. 1. If I make a mock of God, or reproach his name, which is called blasphemy; or if I swear, or take the name of God in vain, or use it in a trifling manner, without seriousness.

Reason against this sin. Because if I make light of the name of God, I shall quickly come to make light of God himself, and live as an enemy to God in the world.

Scripture. God made it a law among the Jews, in " *Lev.* xxiv. 16. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. *Exodus* xx. 7. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. *James* v. 12. Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath."

18 *Q.* What is the second mark of profaneness?

A. 2. If I spend that time amiss, which God has appointed for his own worship and service.

Reason. When God has appointed times of worship, man must not put them to other uses without necessity, for he is not lord of his time.

Scripture. " *Exodus* xx. 8. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy."

19 *Q.* What is the third mark of profaneness?

A. 3. If I laugh at any persons, or jeer them because they are God's ministers or God's people.

Reason against this sin. When persons are abused because they are religious and holy, and belong to God, God takes the abuse as done to himself: And those who laugh at saints, are not likely to become saints themselves.

Scripture. " 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 16. They mocked the messengers of God, and misused his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord arose, and there was no remedy. *Luke* x. 16. He that despiseth you, despiseth me, saith Christ, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. *Zech.* ii. 8. He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye. 2 *Tim.* iii. 3. It is one of the characters of the wicked in the last days, They shall be despisers of those that are good."

20 *Q.* What is the fourth mark of profaneness?

A. 4. If I make a jest of the word of God, or preaching, or prayer, or any part of true religion.

Reason against this sin. They who jest with the Bible and holy things, will not long continue to esteem the Bible, or to practise holiness.

Scripture. " *Ezek.* xii. 26, 31. They have profaned my holy things, and have put no difference between the holy and the profane: Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them, and consumed them with the fire of my wrath."

21 *Q.* We come next to enquire, what do you mean by self-sufficiency as a sin against God?

A. It is when I live as though I had no need of God; and it appears in these three things chiefly.

22 *Q.* What is the first?

A. 1. When I fancy that I have knowledge and wisdom enough to direct me without seeking to God for more.

Reason against this sin. No man on earth has wisdom enough to direct all his own actions, and God will give wisdom to them that ask it.

Scripture. "*Prov.* iii. 5. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. *Prov.* xxviii. 6. He that trusts in his own heart is a fool. *Jer.* x. 23. *James* i. 5."

23 *Q.* What is the second mark of this sinful self-sufficiency?

A. 2. When I am confident of my own strength to do what I please, or to perform the will of God, and ask not for assistance from him nor his Spirit.

Reason against this sin. Because wiser and better persons than I have fallen into sin and shame when they have trusted in their own strength. Witness St. Peter the apostle.

Scripture. "2 *Cor.* iii. 5. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

24 *Q.* What is the third mark of this sinful self-sufficiency?

A. 3. When I trust in my own righteousness and good works to save me, with a neglect of Christ, who is the only Saviour.

Reason against this sin. Because my sins are many, and my best works are imperfect, and they cannot merit or deserve the favour of God; nor can I any way obtain it but by Jesus Christ, who suffered death to reconcile sinners to God.

Scripture. "*Rom.* iii. 23. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. *James* iii. 2. In many things we offend all. *Acts* iv. 10, 12. Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead: There is no other name under heaven given whereby we must be saved. *John* xiv. 6. Christ says, No man cometh to the Father but by me. *Rom.* v. 10. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

PART II.

OF SINS AGAINST OUR NEIGHBOUR.

25 *Q.* Thus we have briefly gone over the sins which are more directly committed against God; we proceed now to the sins which are committed against our fellow-creatures. Can you give me an account what are the chief sins against men, that children are in danger of?

A. Dishonour of superiors, pride and haughtiness of carriage to equals and inferiors, immoderate anger, injustice and lying, evil speaking and slander, cruelty, spite, envy, and uncharitableness.

26 *Q.* When may you be said to dishonour your superiors?

A. Three ways.

27 *Q.* What is the first way of dishonouring your superiors?

A. 1. If I despise my parents, teachers, or rulers, in my heart, or reproach them with my tongue, or make a mockery of them in any way whatsoever.

Reason against this sin. Because if I despise them I can never fulfil the many duties that I owe to them, nor receive benefit from their counsels and advices.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xv. 5. A fool despiseth his father's instructions. *Verse* 20. A foolish man despiseth his mother. *Prov.* xxx. 17. The eye that mocketh his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

28 *Q.* What is the second way of dishonouring your superiors?

A. 2. If I disobey their just and lawful commands.

Reason against this sin. Because God has appointed them to teach and to govern me, as well as to provide for me.

Scripture "*Eph.* vi. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right; honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. *Col.* iii. 20. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

29 *Q.* What is the third way of dishonouring your superiors?

A. 3. If I am obstinate and stubborn against their reproofs and corrections.

Reason against this sin. Such stubborn creatures have nothing to restrain them from running into the worst of sins, and the greatest of miseries, and there have been many dreadful instances of it.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xxix. 1. He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. *Deut.* xxi. 18—21. Under the law of Moses among the Jews, God appointed that, if a man had a stubborn and rebellious son, which would not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, that when they have chastened him will not hearken unto them, the men of their city shall stone him with stones that he die."

30 *Q.* What are the signs of pride and haughtiness of carriage, which is the next sin against our neighbour?

A. Chiefly these four.

31 *Q.* What is the first?

A. 1. If I boast over others, or exalt myself above them beyond measure, on the account of any thing I possess better than they.

Reason against this sin. Because boasters are too ready to forget their dependence on God, and they are hateful in the sight of men.

Scripture. "1 *Cor.* iv. 7. What hast thou that thou dost not receive? Why dost thou glory, or boast, as though thou hadst not received it? *Luke* xiv. 11. Whoso exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

32 *Q.* What is the second mark of pride and haughtiness?

A. 2. If I am conceited and positive in my own opinion, always contradicting and opposing what others say, and will have every thing in my own way, wheresoever I have any thing to do.

Reason against this sin. Because this is treating our fellows as though we were a higher rank of beings than hey; and besides, the most positive and self-conceited persons have sometimes found they have been in the wrong, and been forced to confess it with shame.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xxvi. 12. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more

hope of a fool than of him. 2 *Peter* ii. 10. They despise government, presumptuous are they, and self-willed."

33 *Q.* What is the third sign of pride and haughtiness?

A. 3. A disdainful and scornful carriage towards others, particularly towards the aged, towards servants, and those that are poor.

Reason against this sin. I should not scorn the aged, because I am willing myself to live to be old, and I should not like to be scorned; besides, the aged have more wisdom than I: Nor should I scorn the poor, nor servants, for they are made of the same flesh and blood as I am, and perhaps they may be better than I.

Scripture. "*Lev.* xix. 32. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God. *Prov.* xxiv. 9. The scorner is an abomination to men. *Prov.* iii. 34. The Lord scorneth the scorners. *Prov.* xix. 29. Judgments are prepared for scorners."

34 *Q.* What is the fourth mark of pride, or haughtiness?

A. 4. When I scoff or mock at persons for what is their unhappiness, and not their fault, whether it be at the poor, or the blind, or the lame, or the crooked, or the miserable.

Reason against this sin. Because scoffing is pride joined with ill-nature: It is a double crime. Beside, I may fall under any of these calamities, and I would not be willing others should scoff at me.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xvii. 5. Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker, and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another?"

35 *Q.* Having gone through the marks of pride and haughtiness, tell me now what is immoderate and sinful anger?

A. When I am all in a passion upon every slight occasion, or when I let my anger grow violent or continue long.

Reason against this sin. Because a man in a passion is often led to say or do those things which he bitterly repents of afterwards.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xiv. 29. He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. *Eccles.* vii. 9. Anger resteth, or remaineth long, in the bosom of fools. *Eph.* iv. 26. Be ye angry, and sin not: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil."

36 *Q.* What are the ill consequences of sinful anger?

A. These five:

37 *Q.* What is the first?

A. 1. Railing and calling ill names.

Reason against this sin. Because railers are not fit for sober company, and are very displeasing to God.

Scripture. "*Matt.* v. 22. Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say, thou fool, that is, thou art a wicked wretch, shall be in danger of hell-fire. 1 *Peter* iii. 9. We must not render railing for railing, much less may we begin to rail."

38 *Q.* What is the second ill consequence of sinful anger?

A. 2. Striking of others, striving and fighting, which sometimes reaches even to blood and murder.

Reason against this sin. Because if we are injured, it is better to complain to parents

or masters, that we may have right done us; whereas quarrelling and fighting is but pleasing the devil, and is the cause of much mischief.

Scripture. "*James* iv. 1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not from your lusts? *Gal.* v. 15. If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

39 *Q.* What is the third ill consequence of sinful anger?

A. 3. Cursing, and wishing mischief to befall others.

Reason against this sin. Because this is not loving our neighbour as ourselves. The tongue was made to bless God, and not to curse men, who are made after the image of God. *James* iii. 9. And the mischief sometimes falls upon him that curses.

Scripture. "*Rom.* xii. 14. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. *Psalm* cix. 27. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him."

40 *Q.* What is the fourth ill consequence of sinful anger?

A. 4. Revenge, or doing mischief to others, for some real or supposed injury they have done me.

Reason against this sin. Because it belongs to our rulers and not to us to punish those that injure us. It is our duty to forgive.

Scripture. "*Rom.* xii. 19. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. *Matt.* vi. 15. If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

41 *Q.* What is the fifth ill consequence of sinful anger?

A. 5. Where it is indulged for a few hours, it often turns into sullenness, and if it continue long it will grow into settled malice and hatred.

Reason against sullenness. Because it inclines children, when any thing has offended them, not to eat or drink, not to speak or smile, to go aside into corners and pout; or when they come into company they lower and scowl, and perhaps now and then throw out a dark and spiteful word. Now all this is but taking revenge upon myself, as well as shewing my ill temper to the world.

Reason against malice. A malicious man is the very image of the devil, and can never be beloved by men. See more under the sin of spite, which is near akin to malice.

Scripture. "*Eph.* iv. 31, 32. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. 1 *John* iii. 15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. *John* viii. 44. Ye are of your father the devil—he was a murderer from the beginning."

42 *Q.* Thus much concerning sinful anger, tell me now what is injustice?

A. Taking what is not due to me: And this may be done four ways.

43 *Q.* What is the first sort of injustice?

A. 1. To rob, or plunder, or take away by force what belongs to another.

Reason against this sin. Because if this were fit to be practised, the strongest would have every thing, and the weaker would have nothing.

Scripture. "*Lev.* xix. 13. Thou shalt not rob thy neighbour."

44 *Q.* What is the second sort of injustice?

A. 2. Stealing from another, or taking any thing away privately that belongs to him.

Reason against this sin. Because God sees the thief, though he hide himself from

men: And if stealing might be practised, nobody could be sure to possess what God had given them.

Scripture. "*Exodus* xx. 15. Thou shalt not steal. *Eph.* iv. 28. Let him that stole, steal no more."

45 *Q.* What is the third sort of injustice?

A. 3. Cheating others of their right by cunning or deceit, or by powerful oppression.

Reason against this sin. Because we would not be willing to be cheated or oppressed ourselves.

Scripture. "*Lev.* xix. 13. Thou shalt not defraud, that is, cheat thy neighbour. *Psalm* v. 6. The Lord will abhor the deceitful man. *Lev.* xxv. 14. Ye shall not oppress one another."

46 *Q.* What is the fourth sort of injustice?

A. 4. Not paying what is due, or not performing what is promised.

Reason against this sin. Because if this sort of falsehood and dishonesty were generally practised, there would be no order, nor peace, no trading nor friendly society among men.

Scripture. "*Psalm* xxxviii. 21. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again. *Rom.* xiii. 7, 8. Render to all their dues:—Owe no man any thing, but love one another."

47 *Q.* Having done with injustice, we come to enquire what is lying?

A. It is speaking that for a truth which we know to be false, and thereby deceiving our neighbour.

Reason against this sin. Because, if I give myself to lying, nobody will believe me when I speak the truth.

Scripture. "*Prov.* vi. 17. The Lord hateth a lying tongue. *Rev.* xxi. 8. All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

48 *Q.* What is evil-speaking?

A. It is telling any evil stories of my neighbour, even though they be true, and taking away his good name, when I am not called to it by the providence of God.

Reason against this sin. Because the tongue that delights in scandal, discovers the seed of malice and mischief in the heart.

Scripture. "*Tit.* iii. 2. Speak evil of no man. *Psalm* xv. 1, 3 Lord,—who shall dwell in thy holy hill?—he that backbiteth not with his tongue,—nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. 1 *Cor.* vi. 10. Revilers shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

49 *Q.* What is slander?

A. When I speak some evil concerning my neighbour which is not true, then I slander him.

Reason against this sin. Because this is a double iniquity, for it is evil-speaking and lying joined together; and such a sinner is abominable both to God and man.

Scripture. *Prov.* x. 18. He that uttereth a slander is a fool. *Psalm* l. 16, 19, 20, 22. Unto the wicked God saith,—thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit; thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, thou slanderest thy mother's son: —Consider this, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

50 *Q.* What is cruelty or hardheartedness?

A. It appears chiefly in two things.

51 *Q.* What is the first mark of cruelty?

A. 1. If I delight to put any sensible creature to pain or grief without necessity.

Reason against this sin. This is the temper of the evil spirit who delights to torment men, and I would not have his image copied out upon me.

Scripture. "*Lam.* iii. 33. God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. *Gen.* xlix. 7. Cursed be their wrath, for it was cruel. 1 *Pet.* v. 8. Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

52 *Q.* What is the second instance of cruelty or hardheartedness?

A. 2. If I take pleasure to see others in misery, or refuse to relieve them when it is in my power.

Reason against this sin. Because God teaches me to be merciful as he is, but if I should be cruel to persons in misery, I cannot expect that God or man should relieve me when I am miserable.

Scripture. "*Lam.* i. 21, 22. They have heard that I sigh, and there is none to comfort me: All my enemies have heard of my trouble, and they are glad. 1 *John* iii. 17. He that seeth his brother in want, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

53 *Q.* What is spite?

A. It has always malice in it, and is near akin to cruelty; for it consists in a will or desire to do mischief, and a delight in it.

54 *Q.* How does it manifest itself?

A. In provoking our neighbours with spiteful words, in teazing and vexing the spirits of those that are about us, in doing spiteful and mischievous actions: And such people are never better pleased than when they can disquiet and distress their neighbours, or when any mischief befalls them.

Reason against this sin. Such a temper takes away all comfortable society with our neighbours, and all true quiet and peace from the heart where it dwells. The spiteful man hath scarce any joy but that of the devils.

Scripture. "*Prov.* x. 23. It is as sport to a fool to do mischief. *Prov.* xxiv. 2. Their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief. *Prov.* iv. 16. The wicked sleep not except they have done mischief. *Psalm* x. 14. Thou, O Lord, beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand. *Rom.* xiii. 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour."

55 *Q.* What is envy?

A. As spite rejoices in the mischief that befalls our neighbour, so envy frets and grieves at our neighbour's welfare and prosperity.

Reason against this sin. Envy is a torment and vexation to ourselves, as well as contrary to the love which we owe to our neighbour.

Scripture. "*Rom.* xii. 15. Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4. Love or charity envieth not. *Gal.* v. 19, 21. The works of the flesh are—hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, envying;—and they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. *Prov.* xiv. 30. Envy is rottenness to the bones."

56 *Q.* What is uncharitableness?

A. When I cannot have good thoughts of other persons, nor speak well of them, nor wish well to them, unless they be of my nation, of my opinion, or of my party.

When this relates to parties in matters of religion, it is often called bigotry.

Note, Children would not be so often guilty of this sin, if they were not led into it by the example of those who are elder; but some whole families are unhappily trained up in it from their youngest years.

Reason against this sin. Because persons of very different nations, and contrary opinions and parties, may have many deserving qualities in them, and be worthy of one another's love.

Scripture. "*Rom.* xiv. 3. Let not him that eateth flesh, despise him that eateth not, and let not him who eateth no flesh, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. *Col.* iii. 11, 12. In christianity we are to have no particular regards to—Greek or Jew—barbarian or Scythian, servants or freemen, but Christ is all, and in all; put on therefore bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, &c. Our Saviour in the parable, *Luke* x. 29—37. shews that the Jews and Samaritans, how much soever they differed in other things, should look upon one another as neighbours, to do all offices of kindness to each other."

PART III.

57 *Q.* Having taken a survey of the sins that are committed against God and our neighbour, let us now enquire what are those sins which chiefly relate to ourselves?

A. Acting contrary to our own conscience, intemperance, wantonness, delight in evil company, waste of time, and thoughtlessness of things to come.

58 *Q.* When may you be said to act contrary to your conscience, or to sin against it?

A. When I speak or do any thing which I know or think to be unlawful.

Reason against this sin. Because conscience is that inward guide which God has appointed in man to direct and govern him, and he can have no true peace or joy without obeying it.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xx. 27. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. Those that have not the written law are a law to themselves, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing them. *Rom.* xiv. 5. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. *Verse* 22. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth: But he that doubteth, whether it be lawful to eat flesh, is damned, or self-condemned, if he eateth it. 2 *Cor.* i. 12. This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience. *Prov.* xviii. 15. But a wounded spirit who can bear? which may signify a conscience bitterly afflicted for sin."

59 *Q.* What is intemperance?

A. It is when I indulge my appetite to excess, either in eating or drinking; this is called gluttony and drunkenness.

60 *Q.* When may we be said to indulge our appetites, or eat and drink too much?

A. When we eat and drink so much as is hurtful to the body, or disorders the mind, and unfits us for our duty.

Reason against this sin. Because meat and drink were appointed of God, and given to man to maintain his health, and to render him fitter for his duty, both in body and mind.

Scripture. " *Luke* xxi. 34. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness,—lest the day of judgment come upon you at unawares. *Prov.* xx. 21. Be not amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh, for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty. 1 *Cor.* vi. 10. No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

61 *Q.* What do you mean by wantonness?

A. It is when our words or our actions are lewd and immodest, and when we indulge unclean thoughts and desires.

Reason against this sin. Modesty is as it were a natural virtue to a child, so that lewdness makes him appear like a monster. Besides, those who are lewd and immodest when they are young, become great sinners generally before they are old.

Scripture. " *Tim.* ii. 22. Flee youthful lusts. *Rom.* xiii. 13. Let us walk honestly, or honourably,—not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness. *Eph.* v. 3, 4, 5, 6. Fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. Neither filthy speech, nor foolish talking,—for no unclean person—hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, or of God;—and because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

62 *Q.* When may we be said to delight in evil company?

A. When we readily follow their enticements, and continue among them willingly, and without necessity, notwithstanding their wickedness.

Reason against this sin. Because evil company draws young people insensibly by degrees into their evil opinions, and their wicked practices.

Scripture. " *Prov.* xxii. 24, 25. Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. *Prov.* xiii. 20. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. 1 *Cor.* xv. 33. Evil communications corrupt good manners."

63 *Q.* When may we be said to be guilty of a waste of time?

A. Three ways chiefly.

64 *Q.* What is the first way of wasting time?

A. 1. When I am lazy and slothful, and make an unreasonable waste of time by excessive sleep, or by sauntering about and doing nothing.

Reason against this sin. Because time and the day were given us for work and business of some kind or other; nor is any thing excellent and valuable that relates to this life or the life to come, to be obtained without industry and diligence.

Scripture. " *John* ix. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day. *Prov.* xxiv. 30. I went by the field of the slothful, and it was all grown over with thorns. *Verse* 33. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as a traveller, and thy want as an armed man. *Matt.* xxv. 26, 30. The wicked and slothful servant,—cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. *Prov.* x. 4. The hand of the diligent maketh rich. *Prov.* xxii. 29. Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings. *Heb.* xi. 6. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

65 *Q.* What is the second way of wasting time?

A. When I give myself up to an idle and trifling temper, and busy myself often in that which can turn to no manner of advantage, neither as proper work, nor as proper recreation.

Reason against this sin.* Because time is a valuable blessing, and we must give an account to God how we have spent it; and if we should grow up with a trifling humour, and let all our days be wasted in vanities, we shall neither secure to ourselves the blessings of time nor eternity.

Scripture. "Idleness or trifling may be represented in scriptural expressions. *Isaiah* lv. 2. They labour for that which satisfieth not. *Hab.* ii. 13. They weary themselves for very vanity. *Hosea* viii. 7. They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: There is no stalk of corn ariseth, and the bud shall yield no meal."

Note, It is another of the mischievous effects of this trifling humour, that it renders people dilatory in their own proper business, and they are generally behindhand in all the duties of their place, because they are ever busy about something else. When the proper hour is come for any duty, they have often some very silly and needless thing to do first, or some duty which should have been done long before: They are always ready to say, "it is time enough yet;" and thus they never take time beforehand, but are frequently in a hurry, and are plunged into many inconveniences.

This also may be reproved in scripture language: "*Prov.* xxvii. 1. Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. *Eccles.* ix. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. *Heb.* iii. 7, 13. To-day if ye will hear his voice, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts."

66 *Q.* What is the third way of wasting time?

A. By an excessive love of sport and pleasure.

Reason against this sin. Because sports and recreations were not designed to be the business of our lives, though they may be used sometimes to refresh us, and fit us better for our business.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xxi. 17. He that loveth pleasure, or sport, shall be a poor man: And it is one of the characters of the wicked in the last days, that they shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; 2 *Tim.* iii. 4.

Note, Industry and diligence can never be too much recommended to youth, since trifling and idleness, sauntering and laziness, and a love of pleasure, are most dangerous things, and expose us to all sorts of temptations and evils."

67 *Q.* What is the last sin which relates particularly to ourselves?

A. Thoughtlessness of the most important things to come, particularly of death and judgment, of heaven and hell.

Reason against this sin. Because all these things are great realities, and are of such vast importance as to demand our serious thoughts about them: There is a heaven and there is a hell, though we do not see them now. Death and judgment will come as surely

* I confess that trifling might perhaps rather be reckoned among the follies of childhood than among their sins; and if what men would call trifling an hour now and then should be indulged to children, it must be reckoned among their recreations to fit them better for their business. But when we see a child giving itself up to a perpetual habit of trifling and wasting time, it ought to be reproved, for the consequences of it are dangerous to soul and body: And it is in this sense I rank it among their sins.

as if they were already before our eyes; and it is our duty therefore, and our wisdom to provide beforehand, and be prepared.

Scripture. " *Deut.* xxxii. 29. Oh! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! *Lam.* i. 9. She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully, and she had no comforter. *Heb.* ix. 27. It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment. *Luke* xxi. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man. *Rom.* xiv. 10. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

PART IV.

Having finished our account of the sins of which children and youth are in danger, we come now to consider what are the follies and frailties which are incident to many or all of them. Some of these indeed are owing to a particular natural temper, and for want of more correct and rational education; but others belong to the whole race of mankind in their youngest years, and are sometimes called the vices of youth.

In the mention of these frailties and follies, which can hardly be called sins, unless indulged to excess, it is not to be expected that particular scriptures should be cited to expose or forbid them: For the holy scriptures are not so much written to reprove our frailties, as to secure us from things which are plainly criminal and sinful. Yet it must be confessed there are several hints scattered up and down in the word of God to correct these follies, and to guard against them; because where they are allowed and encouraged they have a sinful tendency, and may bring dishonour on the profession of religion.

They may be comprehended under these following heads, *viz.* 1. Humoursome behaviour. 2. Peevishness. 3. Impatience. 4. Selfishness. 5. Uncleanliness. 6. Heedlessness. 7. Rashness. 8. Fickleness. 9. Profuseness. 10. A talkative or tattling humour.

68 *Q.* How do you describe the first of these follies or frailties, *viz.* a humoursome temper and behaviour.

A. A humoursome temper is when I have a great fondness for little and inconsiderable things, or a great dislike and aversion to them, but still without reason: When I am much pleased or much displeased with trifles, or things that have neither good nor hurt in them, and can do me neither good nor hurt: As for instance, when I must have my meat upon such a particular plate, or my drink out of a cup or glass of such a fashion, or else I can neither eat nor drink: When every part of my garments must be made to a hair's breadth of such a form, or else I cannot wear them: When the covers of my book must be of such a particular colour, or else I cannot read or learn in it: Or when I take upon me to say, I hate the sight of such a thing, merely because it does not strike my fancy right; or when I heap odious names upon things that are innocent and good in themselves, merely because they do not happen to please me.

Reason against this folly. Because our desires and our aversions or dislikes ought to be governed by reason, and not be given up to the mere wantonness of fancy, which hath no rule nor bounds.

69 *Q.* What is the second vice of children, namely, peevishness?

A. It is an uneasy temper and carriage, which is the natural consequent, if not a part of the former folly: For if I am humourous without reason, I shall often be froward and peevish where there is no just cause. If mere fancy and self-will govern me, I shall be often vexed and angry with those who are round about me, because they do not humour my unreasonable fancies, though they act never so much by the rules of reason themselves.

Reason against this vice. By the indulgence of this froward temper, I shall not only give perpetual vexation to myself, and trouble to all that are about me, but I shall render myself unbeloved by all, and my behaviour will be intolerable in any family or any company.

70 *Q.* What is impatience, or the third vice of children?

A. There are four special instances of it.

71 *Q.* What is the first instance?

A. 1. There is impatience under pain or sickness; as, when I am fretful against all about me because I do not feel myself well.

Reasons against this vice. I should not be impatient under sickness, because it is the hand of God that brings it upon me, and impatience rising against God is very sinful. Besides, fretfulness will often increase the distemper, and will hinder my recovery of health.

72 *Q.* What is the second instance of impatience?

A. 2. There is an impatience of opposition; as, when I fall into a passion against one that opposes my opinion, or crosses my will.

Reasons against this vice. I should not be impatient of opposition, because the opinion of another may be wiser than mine, or the will of another may be better than mine; and they have as much right to be angry with me who differ from them, as I have to be angry with them who differ from me.

73 *Q.* What is the third instance of impatience?

A. 3. There is an impatience of disappointment, as, when I vex myself if things do not happen just according to my expectations and wishes.

Reasons against this vice. I should not be impatient under disappointments, but I should learn to be easy under them, because I must expect to meet with many of them, if I live in the world, and therefore I would learn early to bear them.

74 *Q.* What is the fourth instance of impatience?

A. 4. There is an impatience of delay; as, when I fret with eagerness to possess what I desire, and am violently angry with them that defer or delay it.

Reasons against this vice. I should not be impatient of delay, because this shews that I am too eagerly set upon what I desire: And besides, it will many times make me angry with inferiors without a cause, when I imagine they do not make what haste they can to serve me; or angry with my superiors, who know what is fit for me better than I do, and when to give it me.

75 *Q.* What is selfishness, which is the fourth vice incident to some children?

A. It is when I am so entirely wrapped up in pleasing and serving myself, that I take no care or concern to serve or please my neighbour.

Reason against this vice. If this temper abide and grow up with me, I shall be in danger of being churlish and hardhearted now, and grow morose and covetous when I am older.

Now I would not be hardhearted or churlish, for then I should never have the pleasure of making others share in the good things which I possess; and nobody will love me.

Nor would I be morose, for that is a rude and rough way of speaking and behaviour, without regard to the pleasing or displeasing of those with whom we have to do: And if I take no care to please others, or be civil to them, I cannot expect that others should be civil to me, or take any care to please me or serve me.

Nor would I be covetous, for that is a sin often condemned in scripture, and is a very unlovely character among men; nor do such persons themselves ever enjoy the good things which they possess, nor do good with them, for they are afraid to spend them.

76 *Q.* What is meant by uncleanliness, which is the fifth vice which some children are subject to?

A. When I am not careful to keep my hands, or my face, or my clothes clean enough to appear among my betters.

Reason against it. A degree of cleanliness is necessary to my own health, as well as to keep my clothes from spoiling, and to render my company agreeable and inoffensive to others.

Note, In this matter children of different tempers are ready to run into extremes: Some growing up so foolishly nice in their meats, drinks, apparel, and every thing that belongs to them, as to become humoursome therein, and create much trouble to themselves and to those about them: But generally the other extreme prevails, and if children were utterly untaught, perhaps they would be all uncleanly; and some would run into such a degree of nastiness as to give just offence to all who are near them. There is a medium which we call decency, if we could always hit upon it for our own practice, and for an example to children.

Note further, That though the children of the rich have far the greatest advantages to practise this decency, yet the poor should learn to be clean even in their coarse or threadbare garments. There may be a neatness in poverty, which is always agreeable and gains respect.

77 *Q.* What is heedlessness, or the sixth vice of children?

A. When I take little or no care or thought about any thing that I am to do, or when I give but little attention to any thing that is said to me.

Note, This does not always proceed from obstinacy of temper, but often from a mere lightness and wandering of thought and absence of the mind from its present business. Sometimes it may arise from a great degree of natural vivacity, and an excess of spirits; but still it ought to be corrected.

Reason against this fault. Because heedlessness would make me stumble at every stone, and carry me into many a mistake and danger: Besides, if I am heedless, I shall neither grow wise nor good; for I shall neither give diligent attention to instructions at home, nor to sermons at church.

78 *Q.* What is rashness, or the seventh vice or folly of children and youth?

A. I may well be called rash, if I speak without thinking beforehand, and venture upon bold actions without considering the danger.

Note, This rash temper carries children sometimes to climb high trees, to walk on the narrow tops of walls, to venture on the edge of precipices, to try to leap over brooks or currents of water, and thereby they expose themselves to many hazards of their life or limbs.

It is the same temper that inclines them to speak very improper things on a sudden, without due regard to the occasion or the company; it leads them to make rash vows, and promises, and engagements, and thus they bring themselves into many difficulties.

Reason against this folly. Because God has given me the power of reason and of thinking, on purpose to direct my words and my actions; and therefore I ought neither to speak nor act without thought and consideration.

79 *Q.* What is fickleness, or the eighth folly of children?

A. Then I may be called fickle, when I am soon weary of what I was very fond of before; when I am perpetually changing my desires and purposes, so that I can stick to nothing long, but always want something new.

Reason against this frailty. Because if I am always seeking out new things, new books, new lessons, and new employments, I shall never dwell long enough upon any thing to become master of it, or to profit by it, according to the proverb, "a rolling stone gathers no moss." Besides, if I indulge a fickle temper, I shall be often tempted to break my appointments, and my friends will not know how to trust a creature that is ever given to change.

80 *Q.* What is the ninth vice to which children and youth are subject, which is called lavishness or profuseness?

A. I am then profuse, if I squander away much money upon trifles; if I lavish away upon myself more than my friends allow, or give away to others more than is proper on every slight occasion, without considering how far my stock will hold out, nor how much pains it cost my parents to get it, nor ever thinking to how much better purpose this money might be applied.

Reason against profuseness. It is a waste of the good things with which the providence of God and the kindness of my friends have furnished me, to make my life comfortable and honourable: Besides, this profuse and lavish conduct hath put many young creatures upon gaming, to their utter ruin; and those who indulge a wasteful and prodigal humour in their younger days, may bitterly repent their folly in a long poverty, and in the want of all things.

Note, Profuseness is generally the fault of youth, as covetousness is frequently the vice of age.

81 *Q.* Is there any other vice or folly which children are guilty of?

A. A talkative or tattling humour, when children tell all that they see, or hear, or know, in any place or company, without guard or fear.

Reason against this folly. Such great talkers are in danger of becoming busy-bodies and tale-bearers: They will talk over in public the private concerns of their own family,

and the families of others, as far as they know them: They will tell one person whatsoever another happens to speak of him, and do a deal of mischief in the world. Great talkers are often admonished in scripture; but tale-bearing is a sin which the word of God plainly forbids.

Scripture. "*Prov.* xiv. 23. The talk of the lips tendeth only to poverty. *Eccles.* v. 3. A fool's voice is known by a multitude of words. *Eccles.* x. 12, 13, 14. The lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. A fool also is full of words. *Prov.* xx. 3. Every fool will be meddling. 1 *Tim.* v. 13. They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not. *Lev.* xix. 16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people. *Prov.* xi. 13. A tale-bearer revealeth secrets. *Prov.* xxvi. 20. Where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceaseth. *Prov.* xvi. 21. A whisperer, or tale-bearer, separateth chief friends."

THE

CATECHISM

OF

SCRIPTURAL NAMES.

THE PREFACE.

WE have the unspeakable blessing of the word of God among us: We are furnished with a divine history of the transactions of God with men from the beginning of the world. It would be a shame, therefore, if christian families in our land should know nothing of these important affairs. Even from their earliest infancy, children should be trained up in the knowledge of some of the greater and more remarkable names and actions which are recorded in this divine book. Our holy religion, and the gospel of Christ, depend upon some of these ancient facts, nor can the doctrines and duties of christianity be well learned without some knowledge of sacred history; it is indeed a real and substantial part of our religion: An early acquaintance with these things, will not only lead children to understand many parts of the gospel the better, but it will allure them to read their Bible; for it will give them a delightful taste of it beforehand, so that this sort of catechism seems very necessary toward a christian education.

Now to render this work more easy, there are two catechisms of this kind composed. The first is called a Catechism of Scripture-names, for it gives only the name with some single character or action of the person. The second enlarges both on persons and things, and it is called the Historical Catechism.

As for the Short Catechism of Names, the child may begin to learn it as soon as he can speak plain, at the same time that he begins the first of the foregoing catechisms of the principles of religion, which is provided for young children.

You see the name is always contained in the question; but in order to teach children to pronounce the names as well as to learn the character of the person, parents or teachers may ask the same question backward or forward, *viz.* Q. Who was Adam? A. The first man that God made: And then, Q. Who was the first man that God made?

A. Adam. By learning this perfect, children will have learned several things in the Historical Catechism, before they are required to learn it as their proper business.

And to render these things yet more familiar to children, I would propose that the Historical Catechism, and also the larger catalogue of names which are drawn out of scripture, be appointed as lessons to be read at school and at home, by children while they are learning their younger and shorter catechisms. There will be found hard names enough in them to exercise and improve their reading and spelling: And the perpetual variety of new things occurring may allure them to take delight in perusing it. Children of good memories will learn a great part of it by heart in this manner: The scripture histories will stick upon their minds because they strike the young imagination with pleasure, and give an agreeable entertainment.

THE

CATECHISM OF SCRIPTURAL NAMES

FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

THE SCRIPTURE-NAMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Adam?

Answer. The first man that God made, and the father of us all.

2 *Q.* Who was Eve?

A. The first woman, and she was the mother of us all.

3 *Q.* Who was Cain?

A. Adam's eldest son, and he killed his brother Abel.

4 *Q.* What was Abel?

A. A better man than Cain, and therefore Cain hated him.

5 *Q.* Who was Enoch?

A. The man who pleased God,* and he was taken up to heaven without dying.

6 *Q.* Who was Noah?

A. The good man who was saved when the world was drowned.

7 *Q.* Who was Job?

A. The most patient man under pains and losses.

8 *Q.* Who was Abraham?

A. The pattern of believers,† and the friend of God.

9 *Q.* Who was Isaac?

A. Abraham's son according to God's promise.

10 *Q.* Who was Sarah?

A. Abraham's wife, and she was Isaac's mother.

11 *Q.* Who was Jacob?

A. Isaac's younger son, and he craftily obtained his father's blessing.

12 *Q.* What was Israel?

A. A new name that God himself gave to Jacob.

13 *Q.* Who was Joseph?

A. Israel's beloved son, but his brethren hated him and sold him.

14 *Q.* Who were the twelve patriarchs?

A. The twelve sons of Jacob, and the fathers of the people of Israel.

* The usual character of Enoch is, that he walked with God; but this phrase is above the understanding of children: Nor is it given only to Enoch in scripture, for Noah also walked with God; *Gen.* vi. 9. I have rather therefore expressed it, that Enoch pleased God; as in *Heb.* xi. 5.

† It is also the usual character of Abraham, that he was the father of the faithful; *Rom.* iv. 11. but it chiefly means the pattern of believers, which is much easier for children to understand.

15 *Q.* Who was Pharaoh?

A. The king of Egypt, who drowned the children, and he was drowned in the Red Sea.

16 *Q.* Who was Moses?

A. The deliverer and lawgiver of the people of Israel, and he led them through the wilderness.

17 *Q.* Who was Aaron?

A. Moses's brother, and he was the first high-priest of Israel.

18 *Q.* Who were the priests?

A. They who offered sacrifice to God, and taught his laws to men.

19 *Q* Who was Joshua?

A. The leader of Israel when Moses was dead, and he brought them into the promised land.

20 *Q.* Who was Samson?

A. The strongest man, and he slew a thousand of his enemies with a jaw-bone.

21 *Q.* Who was Eli?

A. He was a good old man, but God was angry with him for not keeping his children from wickedness.

22 *Q.* Who was Samuel?

A. The prophet whom God called when he was a child.

23 *Q.* Who were the prophets?

A. Persons whom God taught to foretel things to come, and to make known his mind to the world.

24 *Q.* Who was David?

A. The man after God's own heart, who was raised from a shepherd to a king.

25 *Q.* Who was Goliath?

A. The giant whom David slew with a sling and a stone.

26 *Q.* Who was Absalom?

A. David's wicked son, who rebelled against his father, and he was killed as he hung on a tree.

27 *Q.* Who was Solomon?

A. David's beloved son, the king of Israel, and the wisest of men.

28 *Q.* Who was Josiah?

A. A very young king, whose heart was tender and he feared God.

29 *Q.* Who was Isaiah?

A. The prophet who spake more of Jesus Christ than the rest.

30 *Q.* Who was Elijah?

A. The prophet who was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire.

31 *Q.* Who was Elisha?

A. The prophet who was mocked by the children, and a wild bear tore them to pieces.

32 *Q.* Who was Gehazi?

A. The prophet's servant who told a lie, and he was struck with a leprosy which could never be cured.

33 *Q.* Who was Jonah?

A. The prophet who lay three days and three nights in the belly of a fish.

34 *Q.* Who was Daniel?

A. The prophet who was saved in the lions den, because he prayed to God.

35 *Q.* Who were Shadrach, Meshach, a- Abednego?
A. The three Jews who would not worsh.p an image, and they were cast into the fiery furnace, and were not burned.
36 *Q.* Who was Nebuchadnezzar?
A. The proud king of Babylon, who run mad and was driven among the beasts.

THE SCRIPTURE-NAMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Jesus Christ?
Answer. The Son of God, and the Saviour of men.
2 *Q.* Who was the Virgin Mary?
A. The mother of Jesus Christ.
3 *Q.* Who was Joseph the carpenter?
A. The supposed father of Christ, because he married his mother.
4 *Q.* Who were the Jews?
A. The family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God chose them for his own people.
5 *Q.* Who were the Gentiles?
A. All the nations besides the Jews.
6 *Q.* Who was Cæsar?
A. The emperor of Rome, and the ruler of the world.
7 *Q.* Who was Herod the Great?
A. The king of Judea, who killed all the children in a town, in hopes to kill Christ.
8 *Q.* Who was John the Baptist?
A. The prophet who told the Jews that Christ was come.
9 *Q.* Who was the other Herod?
A. The king of Galilee, who cut off John the Baptist's head.
10 *Q.* Who were the disciples of Christ?
A. Those who learned of him as their Master.
11 *Q.* Who was Nathanael?
A. A disciple of Christ, and a man without guile.
12 *Q.* Who was Nicodemus?
A. The fearful disciple who came to Jesus by night.
13 *Q.* Who was Mary Magdalene?
A. A great sinner, who washed Christ's feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.
14 *Q.* Who was Lazarus?
A. A friend of Christ, whom he raised to life when he had been dead four days.
15 *Q.* Who was Martha?
A. Lazarus's sister, who was cumbered too much in making a feast for Christ.
16 *Q.* Who was Mary, the sister of Martha?
A. The woman that chose the better part, and heard Jesus preach.
17 *Q.* Who were the apostles?
A. Those twelve disciples whom Christ chose for the chief ministers of his gospel.

18 *Q.* Who was Simon Peter?
A. The apostle that denied Christ and repented.
19 *Q.* Who was John?
A. The beloved apostle that leaned on the bosom of Christ?
20 *Q.* Who was Thomas?
A. The apostle who was hard to be persuaded that Christ rose from the dead.
21 *Q.* Who was Judas?
A. The wicked disciple who betrayed Christ with a kiss.
22 *Q.* Who was Caiaphas?
A. The high-priest who condemned Christ.
23 *Q.* Who was Pontius Pilate?
A. The governor of Judea, who ordered Christ to be crucified.
24 *Q.* Who was Joseph of Arimathea?
A. A rich man that buried Christ in his own tomb.
25 *Q.* Who were the four evangelists?
A. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who wrote the history of Christ's life and death.
26 *Q.* Who were Ananias and Sapphira?
A. A man and his wife who were struck dead for telling a lie.
27 *Q.* Who was Stephen?
A. The first man who was put to death for Christ's sake.
28 *Q.* Who was Paul?
A. A young man who was first a persecutor and afterwards an apostle of Christ.
29 *Q.* Who was Dorcas?
A. A good woman who made clothes for the poor, and she was raised from the dead.
30 *Q.* Who was Elymas?
A. A wicked man who was struck blind for speaking against the gospel.
31 *Q.* Who was Apollos?
A. A warm and lively preacher of the gospel.
32 *Q.* Who was Eutychus?
A. A youth who slept at sermon, and falling down was taken up dead.
33 *Q.* Who was Timothy?
A. A young minister, who knew the scriptures from his youth.
34 *Q.* Who was Agrippa?
A. A king who was almost persuaded to be a christian.

THE

HISTORICAL CATECHISM.

THE PREFACE.

AFTER the short Catechism of Scriptural Names has been perfectly learned by heart, the Historical Catechism comes next to be proposed for the instruction of the younger parts of a family in the things recorded in the Bible. Here I have collected together, in as brief a manner as I could, some of the more important transactions which are related in scripture, and which are most proper to be known by children. I have endeavoured to make some connexion of all the parts of this sacred history from one end of it to the other, that the former answers, as far as possible, might lay some foundation for the following questions. This method of composure, if it could be every where observed, would draw on the enquiries in so natural and entertaining a manner, as to invite the native curiosity of young persons to read and remember the answer, and at the same time would give much more ease and delight both to the teacher and learner.

But let it be observed, that though some children may learn this Historical Catechism by ten or twelve years of age in so easy a manner, yet I do not propose it to be learned by all before they begin the Assembly's Catechism: And therefore I call it a Catechism for Children and Youth, supposing that many may not have fully committed it to memory till they are fourteen years old.

Though I have shortened it several times, and struck out many useful parts of this sacred history with some regret, yet I confess I could still wish it shorter; and if any persons think their children will be detained too long in the affairs of the Old Testament, before they come to the history of Christ in the New, which is of much more importance, I would propose that they might learn the History of the New Testament first; or that they might learn two or three questions every week in each part of the Catechism, that is, both of the Old Testament and the New, and so carry both on together. But I hope upon experience that children will find it so entertaining, that they will get through it with ease and pleasure.

But after all the pains taken to render these Catechisms of Scripture History so complete as I could wish, I found it was impossible to contract it into so short a compass as

would be fit for all children without the utter omission of many useful things, and too slight a mention of others. What could not be done here, I have in some measure endeavoured to supply, not only by a more complete summary of the history of the Bible, which is not yet printed,* but I have drawn up here a larger catalogue of scriptural words and names, which contains many more names in it than both these short catechisms together; and I have placed it at the end of these catechisms for the use of those children who have better capacities or better memories, or who have greater advantages and opportunities for knowledge than others have.

In the Historical Catechism I have mentioned the chapter and verse where these scriptural stories are recorded; and when children have learned the names and order of the books of the Bible, and know how to find any text in it by the number of the chapter and verse, they should be employed to search out those places in the scripture to which the Catechism refers, and thus they should acquaint themselves more particularly with the character and history of the persons named in the Catechism by reading it in the Bible themselves. This would be a very delightful way of leading them to a more complete acquaintance with the holy scriptures, which contain in them all necessary truths and duties, to furnish them richly for every good word and work, and which are able to make them wise to salvation.

* This hath been published, entitled, a Short View of the whole Scripture History.

THE

HISTORICAL CATECHISM

FOR

CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was the Maker of the world?

Answer. The Almighty God made the heavens and the earth, and all things that are in them; *Gen.* i. 1. and ii. 1.

2 *Q.* How long was God in making the world?

A. He made it by his word in the space of six days, and he rested on the seventh, and called that day holy; *Gen.* i. 31. *Heb.* xi. 3. *Gen.* ii. 2, 3. *Exod.* xxxi. 15, 17.

3 *Q.* Who were the first man and woman that God made?

A. Adam and Eve; *Gen.* i. 27. and iii. 20.

4 *Q.* In what state did God make them?

A. God made them in his own likeness, in a holy and happy state; *Gen.* i. 26. and v. 1.

5 *Q.* How did they behave themselves? Did they continue in this state?

A. No: They sinned against God, by eating of the fruit of a certain tree which God had forbid them upon pain of death; *Gen.* ii. 17. and iii. 6.

6 *Q.* How came they to eat of this fruit?

A. The evil spirit that lay hid in the serpent persuaded Eve to eat of it, and she persuaded Adam; *Gen.* iii. 1, 2, 12. 2 *Cor.* xi. 3.

7 *Q.* What mischief followed from hence?

A. Sin and death were brought into this world by Adam's disobedience, and spread among all his children; *Rom.* v. 12, 19.

8 *Q.* Were Adam's children all sinners?

A. All of them were born in sin, but there were some in those early times who learned to know and worship the Lord, and were called the sons of God; *Psalm* li. 5. *Rom.* v. 19. *Rom.* iii. 12. *Gen.* iv. 26. and vi. 2.

9 *Q.* Did the knowledge and worship of God abide long in their families?

A. In following ages all mankind grew so bad, that God drowned the world by a flood of water; *Gen.* vi. 5, 17.

10 *Q.* Who was saved when the world was drowned?

A. Noah the righteous man was saved with all his family, and a few living creatures of every kind; *Gen.* vi. 9, 18, 19. and vii. 1.

11 *Q.* How was Noah saved?

A. In an ark or great vessel of wood which God taught him to build; *Gen.* vi. 14. and vii. 7.

12 *Q.* Who were the sons of Noah?

A. Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and by them the world was peopled after the flood; *Gen.* x. 1, 31.

13 *Q.* What crime was Ham guilty of?

A. He made sport with his father, and he was cursed; *Gen.* ix. 21, 24, 25.

14 *Q.* What did Shem and Japheth do?

A. They concealed their father's shame, and they were blessed; *verses* 23, 26, 27.

15 *Q.* Who was God's special favourite in the family of Shem?

A. Abraham, who was called the father of believers and the friend of God; *Rom.* iv. 11. 2 *Chron.* xx. 7.

16 *Q.* Why was he called the father, that is, the pattern of believers?

A. Because he believed some strange promises of God, contrary to the present appearances of things; *Rom.* iv. 11, 18.

17 *Q.* What were those promises?

A. 1. That he should have a son when he was a hundred years old. 2. That his children should possess the land of Canaan wherein he had not a foot of ground. And 3. That all nations should be blessed by his offspring, that is, Christ; *Gen.* xvii. 8, 16, 17. and xii. 3. and xxii. 18. *Acts* vii. 5.

18 *Q.* Why was Abraham called the friend of God?

A. Because God made many visits to him, and he was very obedient to God; *Gen.* xii. 7. and xv. 1. and xvii. 1. and xviii. 1. *James* ii. 21—23. *John* xv. 14.

19 *Q.* What was the first great instance of Abraham's obedience?

A. He left his own country at God's command, not knowing whither he was to go; *Gen.* xii. 1—4. *Heb.* xi. 8.

20 *Q.* What was another great instance of Abraham's obedience?

A. He was ready to offer up in sacrifice his beloved son Isaac at the command of God; *Gen.* xxxii. 12.

21 *Q.* Was Isaac a good man?

A. Yes, he feared the God of his father Abraham, and he went out to pray or meditate in the fields; *Gen.* xxiv. 63. and xxvi. 2, 24, 25.

22 *Q.* Who were Isaac's two sons?

A. Esau the eldest, and Jacob the youngest; *Gen.* xxv. 25, 26.

23 *Q.* What is remarkable concerning Esau?

A. He despised the privilege of being the first-born, and sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage; *Gen.* xxv. 31, 33, 34.

24 *Q.* What is written concerning Jacob?

A. He obtained his father's blessing by deceit, as well as his brother's birth-right by craft; *Gen.* xxvii. 36.

25 *Q.* Why was his name called Israel?

A. Because he afterwards became a very good man, and prayed and prevailed for a blessing from God; *Gen.* xxxii. 26, 28.

26 *Q.* How many sons had Jacob or Israel?

A. Twelve, who were called the twelve patriarchs, or fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel; *Gen.* xxxv. 22. *Acts* vii. 8.

27 *Q.* Who was the most famous of Israel's sons?

A. Joseph, whom his brethren sold into Egypt, and he afterwards became the ruler of the land under Pharaoh the king; *Gen.* xxxvii. 27. and xli. 40. *Acts* vii. 9, 10.

28 *Q.* Did not he then revenge himself upon his brethren?

A. No, he sent for them and their families, together with his father, in the time of famine, and fed them all in the land of Egypt; *Gen.* xlv. 4—7.

29 *Q.* Did the families of Israel continue to dwell in Egypt?

A. Yes, till another Pharaoh king of Egypt made slaves of them, and drowned their children, and then God delivered them by the hand of Moses; *Exod.* i. 11, 22. and iii. 7. and v. 1.

30 *Q.* What was this Moses?

A. He was one of the children of Israel who was wonderfully saved from drowning by Pharaoh's own daughter when he was a child; *Exod.* ii. 10.

31 *Q.* How did God appoint him to deliver Israel?

A. God appeared to him in a burning bush as he was keeping sheep, and sent him to Pharaoh to bid him let Israel go; *Exod.* iii. 1—18.

32 *Q.* What did Moses do to prove that God had sent him?

A. He wrought several miracles or signs and wonders in the sight of Pharaoh; *Exod.* iv. 1—10.

33 *Q.* How did Moses at last deliver the people from their slavery?

A. When Pharaoh refused to let the people go, God gave him power to smite Egypt with many plagues. See the vii. viii. ix. x. and xi. chapters of *Exodus.*

34 *Q.* What was the last of these plagues which procured the release of Israel?

A. An angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians in one night, but he passed over and did not hurt any of the families of Israel; *Exod.* xii. 27, 29.

35 *Q.* How was this deliverance of Israel kept in remembrance to following ages?

A. God appointed the yearly sacrifice of a lamb in every family, which was called the feast of the passover; *Exod.* xii. 3, *&c.*

36 *Q.* When Pharaoh let Israel go out of Egypt how did they get over the Red Sea?

A. Moses with his rod divided the waters of the sea asunder, and the people went through upon dry ground; *Exod.* xiv. 16, 21, 29.

37 *Q.* What became of the Egyptians that followed them?

A. When Moses stretched his hand over the sea the waters returned upon the Egyptians, and they were all drowned; *Exod.* xiv. 28.

38 *Q.* Whither did the children of Israel go then?

A. They went through the wilderness wheresoever God guided them, by a pillar of cloud in the daytime, and a pillar of fire in the night; *Exod.* xiii. 18, 21. *Numb.* ix. 15—23.

39 *Q.* How long was it before they came to the land of Canaan which God promised?

A. They wandered forty years in the wilderness for their sins; *Numb.* xiv. 32, 33.

40 *Q.* What did they eat all that time?

A. God fed them with manna or bread that came down every night from heaven; *Exod.* xvi. 4, 15, 35.

41 *Q.* What did they drink in the wilderness?

A. Moses smote the rock with his rod, and waters gushed out in a river that followed them; *Exod.* xvii. 5, 6. 1 *Cor.* x. 4. *Psalm* cv. 41.

42 *Q.* What did they do for clothes during these forty years?

A. Their garments waxed not old, nor did their shoes wear out; *Deut.* xxix. 5.

43 *Q.* What were the laws which God gave the Israelites when he chose them for his own people?

A. Some general laws that related to their behaviour as men, some special rules relating to their religion as a church, and others about their government as a nation.*

44 *Q.* What were the general laws which related to their behaviour as men?

A. Those laws which are commonly called moral, and which belong to all mankind: These are chiefly contained in the ten commandments; *Exod.* xx. 1—17.

45 *Q.* In what manner was this moral law or ten commandments given them?

A. God first spoke it to them from Mount Sinai with thunder and lightning, and then wrote it for them in two tables of stone; *Exod.* xix. 16, 18. and xx. 1, 18. and xxiv. 12. *Deut.* x. 1—5.

46 *Q.* What were the special laws which God gave them relating to their religion as a church?

A. Many rules about their worship of God, their priests and sacrifices,† about sprinkling of blood and washing with water, about holy times and holy places.

47 *Q.* What was the chief design of these ceremonies?

A. Partly to keep them from the idolatry and evil customs of other nations, and partly to figure out the blessings of Christ and the gospel; *Lev.* xviii. 3, 4, 5. *Col.* ii. 16, 17. *Heb.* ix. 1—14.

48 *Q.* What were their peculiar laws considered as a nation?

A. Such as related to their peace and wars, to their houses and lands, to their wives and servants, to their life and limbs.

49 *Q.* Why did God himself give them such particular rules about these common things?

A. To distinguish them from all other nations as God's own people, and to shew that he was their king as well as their God; *Lev.* xx. 22, 26. *Lev.* xxiv. 22. 1 *Sam.* xii. 12.

50 *Q.* Were the people of Israel obedient to God in their travels through the wilderness?

A. No, they sinned grievously against him, and they were often punished by the hand of God, but he would not utterly destroy them; *Psalm* cv. 43, 45.

51 *Q.* Who brought them into the land of Canaan after their forty years wandering in the wilderness?

A. Moses being dead, Joshua, whose name is the same with Jesus, brought them into the promised land; *Joshua* i. 5, 6, 11. *Acts* vii. 45.

52 *Q.* Did the Israelites behave themselves better when they came to Canaan?

* The laws of the Jews which relate to their behaviour as men, to their religion as a church, and to their government as a nation, are all intermingled in such a manner, that it is hard to say under which head some of them must be ranked; even in the ten commands, which are usually called the moral law, there is something ceremonial and peculiar to the Jews; and indeed they are all properly but one body of laws given to that people whom God chose for his own: Yet, for distinction-sake, they may be distributed into three kinds, as in this Catechism.

† The doctrine of the priesthood and sacrifices had a larger room in this Catechism, but I was constrained to cut this matter short, as well as many others, lest it should be thought tedious to children. See some few more hints about them in the Large Catalogues of Names, Sect. iii. viii. and xiii. See also the Short View of Scripture History, chap. v.

A. No, they frequently fell into idolatry, and worshipped the false gods of the nations round about them; *Judges* ii. 11, 12.

53 *Q.* In what manner did God shew his displeasure for this sin?

A. He gave them up sometimes into the hands of their enemies who plundered them and made slaves of them; *Judges* ii. 14.

54 *Q.* How did God deliver them from the hand of their enemies?

A. When they cried to the Lord he raised up judges who subdued their enemies, and delivered the people; *Judges* ii. 18. and iii. 9, 15.

55 *Q.* What were the names of some of the chief of these judges?*

A. Gideon and Jephthah, Samson, Eli and Samuel.

56 *Q.* Who governed the people of Israel after the judges?

A. They desired a king like other nations, and God bid Samuel anoint Saul to be the first of their kings; 1 *Sam.* ix. and x.

57 *Q.* How did Saul behave himself?

A. He governed well for a little time, but afterwards he rebelled against God, and God removed him; *Acts* xiii. 20, 21.

58 *Q.* What became of Saul at last?

A. Being forsaken of God, and being wounded in battle by the Philistines, he fell on his own sword and died; 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 6. and xxxi. 3, 4.

59 *Q.* Who was the second king of Israel?

A. David, who was raised to the kingdom from keeping of sheep; 1 *Sam.* xvi. 11, 13. *Psalm* lxxviii. 70, 71.

60 *Q.* What was David's character?

A. He was a prophet, and a man after God's own heart, who delivered Israel from their enemies, and ruled them well; 1 *Sam.* xiii. 14. *Acts.* ii. 30. and xiii. 22.

61 *Q.* But was not David guilty of some great sins?

A. Yes, and God punished him for them in the great troubles he met with in his family; 2 *Sam.* xii. 10.

62 *Q.* Who was the third king of Israel?

A. Solomon the son of David, who was the wisest of men; 1 *Kings* iv. 29—31.

63 *Q.* What did Solomon do for God and for the people?

A. He built a very glorious temple for the worship of God at Jerusalem, and he raised the nation of Israel to their highest glory; 1 *Kings* iv. 20, 21, 25. and vi. 1, 2—11—38. and x. 27.

64 *Q.* What became of the people of Israel in following ages?

A. They were divided into two kingdoms, which were called the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel; 1 *Kings* xii. 15—20.

65 *Q.* How did they behave themselves toward God after this division?

A. Most of their kings, as well as the people, provoked God by their idols and their great wickedness; 2 *Kings* xvii. 7, 8.

66 *Q.* How did God punish them for these crimes?

A. When they would not hearken to the prophets which God sent among them, they were carried away captive by their enemies into the land of Assyria; 2 *Kings* xvii. 6, 13, 18, 19, 20. and xxv. 8—11. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14—21.

* See the Catalogue of Scripture-names.

67 *Q.* Did they never return again to their own land?

A. Yes, after seventy years captivity, the tribe of Judah returned, with many of Benjamin and Levi, and they were all called Jews; *Ezra* i. 5. *Nehem.* i. 2.

68 *Q.* What did they do at their return?

A. They built the city Jerusalem, and the temple again, and they set up the worship of the true God; *Ezra* v. 1. and vii. 6, 25. *Nehem.* ii. 17.

69 *Q.* Did they continue afterward to obey God and dwell in their own land?

A. Though they were guilty of many sins, yet they never fell to the worship of idols again; *Rom.* ii. 22. Nor were they ever wholly driven out of their own land till after the coming of the Messiah the Saviour.

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1 QUESTION.

WHO is the Messiah, the Saviour of mankind?*

Answer. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was sent down from heaven to save sinners; *Matt.* xvi. 16. 1 *John* iv. 14.

2 *Q.* How did he come into the world?

A. God prepared a body for him, and he took flesh and blood, and was born of a woman; *Heb.* ii. 14. and x. 5. *Gal.* iv. 4.

3 *Q.* What notices were given of the coming of Christ the Saviour?

A. Many promises had been given of him in former ages by the prophets, and more lately by an angel; *Luke* i. 35, 70.

4 *Q.* What did the prophets foretel concerning the coming of Christ?

A. Among many other things they declared, that a Saviour should be born of the stock of Abraham, of the house of David, and in the town of Bethlehem; *Gen.* xii. 3. *Gal.* iii. 8, 16. 2 *Sam.* vii. 2, 3. *Jer.* xx. 5, 6. *Acts* xiii. 22, 23. *Matt.* ii. 5, 6.

5 *Q.* How did an angel give notice of his coming?

A. The angel Gabriel foretold the birth of John the Baptist to prepare the way for Christ, and he told the mother of Jesus that she should bring forth the Son of God; *Luke* i. 17, 19, 35, 76.

6 *Q.* Who was the mother of Christ?

A. Mary, a virgin of the house of David; *Luke* i. 27, 31, 32.

7 *Q.* Who was the supposed father of Christ?

A. Joseph the carpenter was supposed to be his father, because he married his mother Mary; *Luke* iii. 23. *Matt.* i. 20, 24. and xiii. 55.

8 *Q.* What further witness was given to Christ in his infancy?

A. By angels from heaven, by wise men from the east, and by Simeon in the temple.

9 *Q.* How did angels bear witness to him?

A. They sung praise to God in the air at his birth, and told the shepherds that they should find the child Jesus in a manger at Bethlehem; *Luke* ii. 8—16.

* As the historical part of the Old Testament begins with this question, Who is the Maker of the world? so the historical part of the New Testament may properly begin, Who is the Saviour?

10 *Q.* What witness did the wise men of the east bear to Jesus?

A. They saw a strange star in the east, which led them to the house where the infant lay, and they came and worshipped him; *Matt.* ii. 1, 2, 9, 11.

11 *Q.* What honour did Simeon do him in the temple?

A. He was an old man, yet God assured him that he should see the Saviour before he died, and he took Jesus in his arms and acknowledged him to be the Saviour; *Luke* ii. 26—30.

12 *Q.* What is written concerning the childhood of Christ?

A. At twelve years old he was found talking with the doctors in the temple, but he went home at his mother's call, and was subject to his parents; *Luke* ii. 42, 46, 51.

13 *Q.* When did Christ begin his public ministry?

A. At thirty years of age he came forth and was baptized by John, who was sent from God to preach and to baptize with water; *Luke* iii. 16, 21, 23.

14 *Q.* What was the doctrine which John the Baptist preached?

A. He reproved sinners, he preached repentance and the forgiveness of sins; and he directed his disciples to Jesus as the Saviour; *Mark* i. 4, 7, 8. *John* i. 29. *Acts* xix. 4.

15 *Q.* What became of John the Baptist at last?

A. He was beheaded by Herod, at the wicked request of his niece, when she had pleased him with her fine dancing; *Mark* vi. 17—28.

16 *Q.* What honour was done to Christ at his baptism?

A. The Spirit of God like a dove descended upon him, and a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." *Matt.* iii. 17. *Luke* iii. 22.

17 *Q.* What became of Christ immediately after his baptism?

A. He was forty days in the wilderness, where he endured the temptations of the devil, and overcame the tempter; *Matt.* iv. 1—11.

18 *Q.* What were the chief parts of the ministry of Christ in his life?

A. These five, *viz.** 1. He fulfilled the whole law, and gave us a perfect example of piety toward God, and goodness to men. 2. He preached to the people his divine doctrine which he brought from heaven. 3. He wrought miracles to prove that he was sent from God. 4. He chose out his apostles, and trained them up for their public service. 5. He appointed two lasting ordinances in his church.

19 *Q.* Wherein did he give an example of piety toward God?

A. In his constant obedience to God his Father in all things, in his zeal for God's honour among men, and in his frequent converse with God in prayer; *John* viii. 28, 29, 49. and ii. 17. *Mark* i. 35. *Luke* vi. 12. *John* xvii.

20 *Q.* Wherein did he shew a pattern of goodness toward men?

A. He went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men, he was full of compassion to the miserable, he took children in his arms and blessed them; *Matt.* iv. 23. *Acts* x. 38. *Mark* x. 13—16.

21 *Q.* What were the chief subjects of Christ's preaching to the people?

A. These six things: 1. He explained the law of God to the people, and shewed them

* In this as well as in the Child's Catechism of the principles of religion, there are some answers which are divided into distinct parts by figures, 1, 2, 3, 4. Now in order to make the remembrance of these answers easier to children, the teacher may repeat the question as often as there are parts in the answers. Thus, Q. Which is the first part of his ministry—Q. Which is the second, &c.

that it required holiness in their thoughts as well as in their words and actions; *Matt.* v. and vi. and vii. 2. He reproved and condemned many for their sinful and foolish traditions, and taught them that God did not regard ceremonies so much as the great duties of love to God and love to men; *Matt.* xxii. 36—40. and xxiii. 4, 16, 18, 23, 24, 25. 3. He preached the gospel of pardon of sin and eternal life in heaven to them that repent and believe in him; *Matt.* iv. 17. *John* iii. 16, 17. 4. He threatened the eternal punishment of hell to all wilful and obstinate sinners, particularly to hypocrites and unbelievers; *Matt.* xiii. 41, 42. and xxiii. 28, 29, 33. *John* iii. 18, 36. and viii. 24. 5. He sometimes declared and maintained his own commission, that he was sent from God to be the Saviour of men; *John* v. 19—41. 6. He foretold the destruction of the Jews, and his own second coming in glory to raise the dead, and to judge the world. *Matt.* xxiv. 15—28—35. xxv. 31—46. *John* v. 27, 28, 29.

22 *Q.* What were the chief miracles that he wrought to prove he was sent from God?

A. Such as these: 1. He fed many thousand persons twice with a very few loaves and fishes; *Matt.* xiv. and xv. 2. He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, he made the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and healed all manner of diseases by a word; *Matt.* iv. 23. and xi. 5. 3. He commanded evil spirits to depart out of the bodies of many whom they had possessed; *Mark* i. 27. 4. He raised several persons from the dead, and one, namely Lazarus, out of the grave; *Mark* ix. *Luke* vii. *John* xi.

23 *Q.* How did he train up his apostles for their public service?

A. These four ways: 1. He explained to them in private what he taught the people by parables and similitudes in public; *Mark* iv. 34. 2. He told them more plainly that he was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, and that he should die as a ransom for sinners, and rise again the third day; *Matt.* xvi. 16—22. and xx. 28. 3. He prayed with them often, and taught them to pray, first without his name, and then in his name. *Luke* xi. 1, 2. *John* xvi. 23. 4. He promised them to send the Spirit of God after his departure to fit them for their public service; *Luke* xxiv. 49. *John* xv. 26. and xvi. 7.

24 *Q.* What were the two ordinances which Christ appointed in his church?

A. He appointed baptism and the Lord's-supper to continue to the end of the world; *Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20. 1 *Cor.* xi. 23—26.

25 *Q.* Thus we have heard how Jesus lived, let us hear now in what manner did he die?

A. He was meek and patient and resigned to the will of God in suffering and dying; *John* xviii. 11. *Matt.* xxvi. 39.

26 *Q.* What were his sharpest sufferings?

A. The anguish which he endured in his soul in the garden just before his death, which made him sweat drops of blood; *Mark* xiv. 33, 34. *Luke* xxii. 44.

27 *Q.* What kind of death did he die?

A. He was crucified, that is, his hands and feet were nailed to a wooden cross, and there he hung till he died in extreme pain; *Mark* xv. 24. *John* xx. 25.

28 *Q.* When Jesus Christ had honoured God so much in his life, how came he to die so shameful and painful a death?

A. He was appointed of God to be a sacrifice, to take away the sins of men who had deserved to die; *Acts* ii. 23. 2 *Cor.* v. 21. *Heb.* ix. 26.

29 *Q.* But what reason had men to kill him?

A. No just reason at all; but the teachers and the rulers of the Jews hated his doctrine and reproofs, and were much enraged to see the people follow him; *Matt.* xxi. 45, 46. *Mark* xv. 10.

30 *Q.* How did they lay hold of Jesus?

A. They bribed Judas one of his apostles to betray him into the hands of their officers, and he led them to his Master by night, and shewed which was he by kissing him; *Matt.* xxvi. 14, 15, 47, 49.

31 *Q.* Did none of the disciples defend their Lord and Master?

A. Peter at first defended him with the sword, but afterwards his courage failed him so far as to deny that he knew him? *John* xviii. 10, 25, 27. *Matt.* xxvi. 72.

32 *Q.* Did Peter continue in this sin, or did he repent?

A. Jesus cast his eye upon him, and he repented and wept bitterly; *Matt.* xxvi. 75.

33 *Q.* Who condemned Christ to die?

A. Caiaphas the high-priest condemned him as worthy of death, and Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, at the desire of the Jews, gave him up to be nailed to the cross; *Matt.* xxvi. 57, 65, 66. and xxvii. 24—26.

34 *Q.* Was he crucified immediately, or did he suffer other injuries before his death?

A. He was mocked, he was spit upon, he was crowned with thorns, he was scourged and wickedly abused; *Matt.* xxvii. 29—31.

35 *Q.* In what company was he crucified?

A. He was crucified in a most shameful manner between two thieves, as if he had been the chief of sinners; *Luke* xxiii. 33.

36 *Q.* What miracles attended his death?

A. The sun was darkened at noon for three hours together; there was an earthquake which opened many graves, and the veil of the temple was rent in two pieces; *Matt.* xxviii. 50—54.

37 *Q.* Who took care of his burial?

A. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and one of his disciples, buried him in his own new tomb, and Pilate and the Jews set a guard of soldiers about it; *Matt.* xxvii. 57—66.

38 *Q.* When did he rise from the dead?

A. On the first day of the week after he had lain three days in the grave, that is, part of three days; *Matt.* xxviii. 1—5.

39 *Q.* To whom did he appear after his rising again?

A. He appeared many times to his disciples, he eat and drank and talked with them, and gave them most certain proofs of his resurrection; *Acts* i. 3. and x. 41.

40 *Q.* How long did he tarry on earth after his rising from the dead?

A. He tarried forty days conversing with his apostles, and instructing them further in the gospel and the doctrines and rules of his kingdom; *Acts* i. 3.

41 *Q.* How did he go up to heaven?

A. When he had given his apostles their commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and blessed them, they saw him carried up to heaven in a bright cloud; *Mark* xvi. 15—19. *Acts* i. 9.

42 *Q.* What did the disciples do when their Lord had left them?

A. They returned to Jerusalem, and waited for the Spirit of God to come upon them, according to the promise of Christ; *Acts* i. 4, 12, 14.

43 *Q.* What was the first thing they did towards their public work?

A. They chose Matthias by prayer and by lot to be an apostle in the room of Judas the traitor; *Acts* i. 23—26.

44 *Q.* What became of Judas?

A. When he saw that Christ was condemned he went and hanged himself; and falling down, his bowels gushed out; *Matt.* xxvii. 3, 5. *Acts* i. 18.

45 *Q.* When did the Spirit of God come upon the apostles and other disciples?

A. At the feast of pentecost, which was about ten days after Christ went to heaven; *Acts* ii. 1, &c.

46 *Q.* In what manner did the Spirit of God come upon them?

A. A noise like a rushing wind filled the house where they were met, and cloven tongues of fire sat upon them; *Acts* ii. 2, 3.

47 *Q.* What was the first remarkable effect of the Spirit of God coming upon them?

A. Each of them was enabled to preach the gospel in strange languages; *Acts* ii. 4, 5, 6.

48 *Q.* What was the doctrine they preached?

A. That Jesus who was crucified was the Messiah, that is, the Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of men; and that sinners who repent and believe in his name should be saved; *Acts* ii. 36, 38. and iii. 19. and iv. 10, 12.

49 *Q.* What success had their preaching?

A. Three thousand were converted and baptized in one day, and five thousand in another; *Acts* ii. 41. and iv. 4. and v. 14.

50 *Q.* What miracles did they work to confirm their doctrine?

A. Some that were cripples had the use of their limbs given them, multitudes of sick were healed by them, some persons were struck dead, and others raised to life; *Acts* iii. 2, 7. and v. 1—11, 15, 16. and ix. 40.

51 *Q.* Had not other believers in Christ power of working miracles also?

A. Yes, Jesus Christ communicated very great gifts and powers to them by laying on of the hands of the apostles; *Mark* xvi. 17, 18. *Acts* vi. 6, 8. and viii. 14—18.

52 *Q.* Were not the apostles greatly persecuted?

A. Yes, they were put in prison by the high-priest, they were beaten by order of the council, James the brother of John was slain by Herod, and Peter was put in prison again, in order to be put to death; *Acts* v. 18, 19, 40. and xii. 2, 3, 11.

53 *Q.* Did God give them any miraculous deliverances?

A. Several times when the apostles were imprisoned they were released by angels; *Acts* v. 18, 19. and xii. 7. and xvi. 25, 26.

54 *Q.* Who was one of the chief persecutors of the christians at this time?

A. Saul, a young man, a zealous Pharisee, who was afterwards called Paul; *Acts* vii. 58. and viii. 1, 3.

55 *Q.* Did he live and die a persecutor?

A. No, he was struck down to the ground by a blaze of light as he was going to Damascus to imprison the christians, and Jesus Christ called him with a voice from heaven; *Acts* ix. 1—8.

56 *Q.* What is afterwards related of him?

A. That he became a zealous preacher of the gospel, he was made the apostle of the gentiles, and spent his days in travelling to convert the heathen nations; *Acts* ix. 20—22. *Gal.* ii. 7, 8. *Rom.* xv. 16—21.

57 *Q.* What became of Paul at last?

A. After he had done more service for Christ by preaching and writing than any of the other apostles, and endured more sufferings in his life, he was put to death at Rome as a martyr for Christ; 2 *Cor.* xi. 23—27. 2 *Tim.* iv. 6.

58 *Q.* Is there any further account given of Peter?

A. When he had laid out his life in preaching the gospel, and had written letters to the christians, he was crucified in his old age as Christ foretold him; *John* xxi. 18, 19. 2 *Peter* i. 14.

59 *Q.* What is recorded concerning John the apostle?

A. After many labours in the ministry he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where Jesus Christ appeared to him in visions, and instructed him by his angel to write the book of the Revelation; *Rev.* i. 1, 2, 9.

60 Q. What became of the other apostles?

A. Ancient histories give us some uncertain account of their travels and their sufferings, but there is very little written in scripture concerning them.

A

CATALOGUE

OF

REMARKABLE NAMES IN SCRIPTURE.

THE PREFACE.

THESE two foregoing Catechisms of Scriptural Names and of Sacred History, may be sufficient for the instruction of those children in their younger years of life, who have either low capacities, short memories, or very few advantages and opportunities for their acquaintance with the historical part of the Bible. But there are other young creatures of brighter genius who make learning their delight, or whose memories are stronger to retain what they learn, or who are furnished by the providence of God with more time and happier advantages for knowledge: Now for the entertainment and improvement of these children, I have collected a larger Catalogue of the most remarkable names and things in scripture, most of which are entirely omitted in the two Catechisms, for fear lest if these things had been proposed to be learned by all children, it should have been too great a burden for many of them. Those that please may supply what is wanting in the Catechisms out of the following Catalogue, and turn it into questions and answers with the greatest ease.

A

LARGE CATALOGUE

OF REMARKABLE

SCRIPTURE-NAMES,

SET DOWN AND EXPLAINED FOR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

SECTION I.

NAMES OF GOD, CHRIST, ANGELS, SPIRITS, &c.

JEHOVAH, The name of the true God, the God of Israel; *Psalm* lxxxiii. 18.

Jah, The same with Jehovah, shortened; *Psalm* lxviii. 4.

I am that I am, The name by which God sent Moses to release Israel from bondage; *Exod.* iii. 14.

The Lord of Hosts, Another name of God, signifying his government over the armies of creatures.

Alpha and Omega, A name of God, signifying the first and the last.

Jesus Christ, The Son of God, and the Saviour of men.

Jesus, The proper name of Christ, signifying a Saviour.

Christ, One that is anointed or appointed of God.

Messiah, The same in the Hebrew as Christ is in the Greek.

Emmanuel, A name of Christ, signifying God with us.

The Word of God, A name of Christ, because he reveals the mind of God to men.

The Lamb of God, A name of Christ, because he was a sacrifice for sin, and he appeared to the apostle John in the form of a lamb.

The Holy Ghost, The Spirit of God, who makes his people holy.

Michael, The archangel, that is, the chief angel, or the prince of angels, supposed to be Jesus Christ.

Gabriel, The angel who was sent to give notice that Christ was coming into the world.

Satan,
Beelzebub,
Abaddon,
Apollyon,
} Different names for the devil, or the prince of devils.

The old Serpent or Dragon, The devil so called, because he hid himself in a serpent to tempt Adam and Eve.

SECTION II.

HEATHEN IDOLS, GODS AND GODDESSES.

Baal. An idol of the Canaanites, worshipped by some of the kings of Israel.

Ashtaroth, A goddess of the Sidonians.

Dagon, An idol of the Philistines which fell down and was broken to pieces before the ark of God.

Moloch, An idol of the Ammonites, to whom children were burned alive in sacrifice.

Mammon, The god of riches among the Syrians, as some have supposed; others say, it is only a name for riches.

Jupiter, The chief god among the Grecians and Romans.

Mercury, The messenger of the heathen gods.

Diana, A heathen goddess, who had a noble temple at Ephesus: She was the goddess of hunting.

Mars, The heathen god of war.

SECTION III.

CHARACTERS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN IN GENERAL.

Kings, A special title of honour for the chief rulers of a nation.

Priests, Those who offered sacrifices, and were chief managers in the things of religion and worship in every nation.

ISRAELITES, OR JEWS.

Israelites, Those who came from Jacob or Israel, and God chose them for his people.

Hebrew of Hebrews, One whose father and mother were Israelites.

Jews, The same as Israelites, so called after their return from the captivity in Babylon, because most of them were of the tribe of Judah.

Patriarchs, Fathers of families, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and his twelve sons.

Judges extraordinary, Governors whom God raised up in an immediate manner to take care of his people Israel.

Judges ordinary, Rulers of the several cities and tribes of Israel, chosen by the people.

Prophets, Men taught of God, who foretold things to come.

Elders, Seventy grave and wise men who had a hand in the government.

Priests, The sons of Aaron, who offered sacrifice, explained the law to the people, prayed for them, and blessed them.

High-priest, The chief of the priests, who should be always the eldest son in Aaron's family.

Levites, the tribe of Levi; those of them who were not of Aaron's family, were assistants in the ceremonies of worship, and teachers of the people.

Nazarites, Persons who put themselves under a vow of abstaining from wine, and letting their hair grow long, &c.

Rulers of the Synagogues, Elder or grave men, who were to take care of order and decency in the synagogue-worship.

Scribes, Those who wrote and taught the law of Moses.

Pharisees, A sect among the Jews, the chief pretenders to religion, precise and zealous for ceremonies.

Sadducees, Some Jews who believed neither angel, nor spirit, nor a world to come, and thought all God's promises regarded this life only.

Herodians, Jews who formed their opinions and religion to please Herod.

GENTILES.

Gentiles or Heathens, All the nations besides the Jews.

Greeks or Grecians, A learned people amongst the heathens.

Barbarians, All the unlearned people amongst the heathens.

Note, Jews and Greeks signify Jews and gentiles; but Greeks and barbarians signify the learned and the unlearned gentiles.

Proselytes, Heathens who received and owned the God of Israel.

Governors, Those who ruled the provinces under the Roman emperors were sometimes called governors, sometimes kings, or sometimes deputies, as the emperor pleased.

Tetrarchs, Such deputy governors as had kingly power in four provinces.

Publicans, Those who gathered the taxes: They were chiefly gentiles.

Centurions, Captains of a hundred soldiers.

Philosophers, Professors and teachers of wisdom.

Epicureans and Stoics, Different sects of heathen philosophers.

CHRISTIANS.

Disciples of Christ, Those who learned the doctrine of Christ, and took him for their Teacher and Master.

Apostles, Those twelve disciples whom Christ chose for his chief ministers, and sent them abroad to preach the gospel.

Prophets, Those who spoke by inspiration of God, especially such as foretold things to come.

The four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who wrote the history of Christ.

Note, Sometimes the word evangelist signifies an inspired preacher of the gospel.

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Extraordinary ministers in the first age of the christian church.

Bishops, Elders, Pastors, Teachers, Ordinary ministers to continue in all ages in the church for teaching and government.

Deacons, Officers chosen and appointed to take care of the poor in the church.

SECTION IV.

NAMES OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS, THE FATHERS OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

Reuben, The first-born; but he defiled one of his father's wives.

Simeon and Levi, They wickedly slew the Shechemites after they had made a league with them.

Levi, The priesthood and care of the worship of God was given to his family or tribe.

Judah, The kingdom was promised to his family: From him came David and Christ.

Joseph, Israel's beloved son; but his brethren hated him and sold him into Egypt, where he was made ruler of the land.

Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, and Benjamin, are the other seven patriarchs, but have nothing so remarkable recorded concerning them.

Ephraim and Manasseh were the two sons of Joseph, but Jacob in prophecy appointed them to make two distinct tribes in the nation of Israel.

SECTION V.

NAMES OF KINGS.

JEWS.

Saul, The first king of Israel; he sought his father's cattle, and the prophet found him and anointed him king.

David, The man after God's own heart, who was raised from a shepherd to a king.

Solomon, A king of Israel, and the wisest of men; he built the temple at Jerusalem.

Rehoboam, A proud young king of Israel, who lost all his subjects except Judah and Benjamin.

Jeroboam, The first king of Israel when they parted from Judah, and he set up the idolatry of the calves.

Ahab, An ungodly king of Israel, who set up the idol Baal.

Hezekiah, A good king of Judah, who reformed the nation; he prayed when he was sick, and was promised that he should live fifteen years longer.

Manasseh, A king of Judah, who did much wickedness, but he repented and was forgiven.

Josiah, A very young king of Judah, whose heart was tender, and he feared God.

Zedekiah, The last king of Judah; he was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and had his eyes put out.

GENTILES.

Abimelech, The name of some of the ancient kings of the Philistines.

Pharaoh, The name of the kings of Egypt; one who made the Israelites slaves, was drowned in the Red Sea with all his army.

Balak, King of Moab, who hired Balaam to curse Israel.

Adonibezek, The king of Bezek in Canaan, who had cut off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten kings, and was served so himself at last.

Eglon, A king of Moab, who oppressed Israel, and was stabbed with a dagger by Ehud their deliverer.

Jabin, King of Canaan, who had three hundred chariots of iron, and was conquered under the government of Deborah.

Hiram, King of Tyre, who furnished Solomon with timber and workmen toward the building the temple.

Sennacherib, The king of Assyria who besieged Jerusalem, but an angel of God destroyed his army, even one hundred and fourscore thousand men, in one night.

Nebuchadnezzar, The proud king of Babylon who destroyed Jerusalem, but he ran mad, and was driven among the beasts.

Belshazzar, The last king of Babylon, who in the midst of his jollity was frighted by the hand which appeared against the wall, and was slain that night.

Darius, The king of the Medes and Persians, who put Daniel into the lions den sore against his will; and afterwards threw in his accusers there.

Cyrus, The king of Persia who commanded the Jews to build their city and temple again.

Ahasuerus, The king of Persia who took Esther, a jewish young woman, for his queen.

Cæsar, The emperors of Rome and the rulers of the world were so called.

Augustus Cæsar, The emperor of the world when Christ came into it.

Herod the Great, The king of Judea, who killed all the children in Bethlehem, in hopes to kill Christ.

Herod, The king of Galilee, who cut off John the Baptist's head.

Agrippa, A king who was almost persuaded to be a christian.

SECTION VI.

NAMES OF GOVERNORS, JUDGES, AND OFFICERS.

JEWS.

Moses, The deliverer and the lawgiver of Israel: He was said to be the meekest of all men.

Joshua, The leader of Israel, who brought them into the promised land.

Gideon, The captain who frighted a great army of Midianites with lamps and pitchers in the hands of three hundred men.

Jephthah, The captain who before the battle made a vow, and it fell upon his own daughter.

Samson, The strongest man, and he slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, and at last slew himself with the Philistines by pulling down the house on their heads.

Zerubbabel, a prince of the Jews, who took care of the building of the temple at their return from Babylon.

Nehemiah, A governor who assisted the Jews in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and settling their state.

GENTILES.

Pontius Pilate. The governor of Judea, who ordered Christ to be crucified.

Felix, A governor who trembled when Paul preached.

Festus, Another governor, who sent Paul prisoner to Rome.

Cornelius, A Roman centurion, who was converted to the christian religion by Peter.

Sergius Paulus, A governor in Cyprus, who was converted by Paul.

SECTION VII.

NAMES OF PROPHETS.

Moses, The lawgiver of the Jews, and the greatest prophet the world ever had till the coming of Christ.

Samuel, The prophet whom God called when he was a child: He was also a judge of Israel.

David, A king and prophet.

Elijah, The prophet who was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire.

Elisha, The prophet who was mocked by the children, and a wild bear tore them in pieces.

Isaiah, The prophet who spoke more than any other concerning Christ and the gospel.

Jeremiah, The prophet who foretold the captivity of Israel in Babylon, and their return.

Amos, The herdsman, who was made a prophet.

Jonah, The prophet who lay three days and three nights in the whale's belly.

Daniel, The prophet who was cast into the lions den for praying to God, and was saved there.

Haggai and Zechariah, The prophets who encouraged the Jews in building the temple.

Malachi, The last of the prophets before the coming of Christ.

John the Baptist, The prophet who told that Christ was come.

Prophets in the christian church were many: The most noted besides the apostles was *Agabus,* Who foretold a general famine, and Paul's being laid in fetters at Jerusalem.

Note, Among the apostles, Peter, John and Paul foretel many things to come in their writings, and may well be called prophets, but an apostle is a higher title.

SECTION VIII.

NAMES OF PRIESTS.

Melchisedeck, The king of Salem, and the priest who blessed Abraham.

Jethro, A priest or prince of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, who gave him counsel about the government of the Israelites.

Aaron, The brother of Moses, and the first high-priest of Israel.

Nadab and Abihu, Two priests, the sons of Aaron, who were slain by fire from heaven, for offering sacrifice with other fire than God had appointed.

Phineas, A grandson of Aaron, whose zeal against idolatry was greatly approved of God and rewarded.

Eli, A high-priest and a judge of Israel, who fell down and died for grief, when he heard the ark of God was taken by the Philistines.

Abiathar, The high-priest who was thrust out of his office by Solomon for treason.

Zadok, The high-priest who anointed Solomon king.

Jehoiada, The high-priest who turned Athaliah, a wicked woman, out of the throne of Judah, and restored the family of David.

Joshua or Jeshua, The high-priest who assisted Zerubbabel in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem at the return from Babylon.

Ezra, The priest and scribe who greatly promoted the restoration of the worship of God at the Jews return.

Caiaphas, The high-priest who condemned Christ upon a pretence of blasphemy.

SECTION IX.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

Simon Peter, The apostle who denied Christ, but repented and wept bitterly.

Andrew, The brother of Peter; they were both fishermen.

John, The beloved disciple who leaned on Jesus' bosom at the last supper.

James, The Greater, that is, the elder, he was the brother of John; these two were also fishermen.

Philip, The apostle who asked Christ to shew them God the Father.

Bartholomew, Who is supposed to be the same with Nathanael.

Thomas, The apostle who was hard to be persuaded that Christ was risen from the dead.

Matthew, The publican who is called Levi; he wrote the gospel of Matthew.

James, The Lesser, or younger, the son of Alpheus or Cleophas; he is called the Lord's brother or cousin.

Jude, The brother of James the Lesser: He is named Lebbeus and Thaddeus.

Simon, Who is called Zelotes.

Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his Master, and hanged himself.

Besides these twelve, there were two or three others, *viz.*

Matthias, Who was chosen by lot in the room of Judas Iscariot.

Paul, The apostle of the gentiles, who was called by Christ after he ascended to heaven.

And *Barnabas,* is once called an apostle, who accompanied Paul in his labours. *Acts* xiv. 14.

SECTION X.

NAMES OF MEN REMARKABLE.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Adam, The first man that God made.

Cain, Adam's eldest son, a wicked man who killed his brother.

Abel, Adam's second son, a righteous man whom Cain slew.

Enoch, The man who walked with God, and was taken to heaven without dying.

Methuselah, The oldest man that we ever read of, almost a thousand years old.

Noah, The good man who was saved when the world was drowned.

Job, The most patient man under grievous pains and losses.

Abraham, The pattern of believers, and the friend of God.

Lot, The righteous man who was delivered when Sodom was destroyed.

Isaac, Abraham's son according to God's promise.

Ishmael, Abraham's son by his maid Hagar.

Esau, Isaac's eldest son, who sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage.

Jacob or Israel, Isaac's youngest son, who craftily obtained his father's blessing by deceit.

Israel, A new name that God gave to Jacob, because he prevailed with God in prayer.

Corah, The wicked man whom the earth swallowed up alive, for daring to be a priest without God's order.

Balaam, The heathen prophet or enchanter who would have cursed Israel, but God forced him to bless them.

Goliath, A giant whom David slew with a sling and a stone.

Jonathan, One of the sons of Saul, in strict friendship with David.

Absalom, David's wicked son, who rebelled against his father, and he was killed as he hung on a tree by his hair.

Adonijah, Another son of David, who set up himself for king against his father's will, because his father had always humoured him.

Obadiah, A good servant in the wicked court of Ahab, who feared the Lord from his youth.

Gehazi, The prophet Elisha's servant, who told a lie, and he was struck with an incurable leprosy.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, The three Jews who were cast into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship a golden image, and were not burned.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Jesus Christ, The Son of God, and the Saviour of men.

Joseph the Carpenter, The supposed father of Christ, because he married Mary his mother.

Simeon, The old man who took the child Jesus into his arms in the temple, and blessed God for shewing him the Saviour.

John the Baptist, The forerunner of Christ, who baptized with water those who professed repentance.

Nathanael, A disciple of Jesus, and a man without guile.

Nicodemus, The disciple who came to Jesus by night, for fear of being seen.

Zaccheus, A little man who climbed up a tree to see Christ.

Lazarus, The man whom Christ raised when he had been dead four days.

Barabbas, The thief whom the Jews saved when they gave up Christ to be crucified.

Joseph of Arimathea, A rich man who buried Christ in his own sepulchre.

Barnabas, A man that sold his land, and became a preacher of the gospel, and a companion of Paul.

Ananias and Sapphira, A man and his wife, who were both struck dead for telling a lie.

Gamaliel, A wise man, and a doctor of the law, who was St. Paul's master.

Stephen, The first man that was put to death for Christ's sake.

Philip, One of the deacons, and a preacher of the gospel.

Simon, called Simon Magus, A sorcerer or conjurer, who thought to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost for money.

Elymas, A wicked man, a sorcerer or conjurer, who was struck blind for speaking against the gospel.

Silas, or Silvanus, A companion and fellow-prisoner of St. Paul.

Timothy, A young preacher of the gospel, who knew the scriptures from his youth.

Titus, Another preacher of the gospel, under the direction of St. Paul.

Apollos, A warm and lively preacher of the gospel.

Aquila and Priscilla, A man and his wife who assisted the ministers of Christ in spreading the knowledge of the gospel.

Philemon, A friend of Paul, at whose house Paul had a lodging.

Onesimus, A servant of Philemon, who ran away from him to Rome, and was there converted by Paul.

SECTION XI.

NAMES OF WOMEN REMARKABLE.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Eve, The first woman, and Adam's wife.

Hagar, Abraham's maid, whom he took for a concubine.

Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Isaac's mother.

Rebecca, Isaac's wife, and the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Deborah, The prophetess who saved and judged Israel, and dwelt under a palm-tree.

Hannah, Samuel's mother, who prayed to God, and went away cheerful.

Abigal, A very courteous woman, widow of Nabal the churl, and afterward the wife of David.

Bathsheba, First the wife of Uriah, afterwards David's wife, and Solomon's mother.

Queen of Sheba, She came from her own land to Jerusalem to see the grandeur and wisdom of Solomon.

Athaliah, A wicked woman who killed the royal family of Judah, and set herself up for queen, when the king her son was dead.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, and queen of Israel, who killed the prophets of God.

Esther, A jewish woman, and the queen of Persia, who saved all the Jews from being murdered.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Virgin Mary, The mother of Jesus Christ.

Elizabeth, The mother of John the Baptist, and cousin to the Virgin Mary.

Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, whose daughter danced so well to please Herod, that at her request he cut off John the Baptist's head.

Mary Magdalene, A great sinner who washed Christ's feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.

Martha, The woman who was cumbered too much in making a feast for Christ.

Mary, the sister of Martha, the woman that chose the better part, and heard Jesus preach.

Dorcas or Tabitha, A woman who made clothes for the poor, and was raised from the dead by Peter.

SECTION XII.

NAMES OF COUNTRIES, CITIES, RIVERS, &c.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Eden, The garden where God put Adam and Eve.

Chaldea, Abraham's native country, whence he came when God called him.

Canaan, The land which God promised Abraham to give his children.

Sodom and Gomorrah, Most wicked cities which God burned with fire and brimstone from heaven.

The Dead Sea, The lake which arose when Sodom and Gomorrah were burned and sunk under water.

Bethel, The place where Jacob slept, and in his dream saw the angels of God ascending and descending.

Egypt, The land where Joseph was sold for a slave, and afterwards made the ruler of it; and it was the country where all the Israelites were afterwards made slaves.

The Red Sea, A great sea that was dried up for the people of Israel to go through on foot.

Sinai, The hill where God spoke the ten commandments with thunder and lightning.

Pisgah, The hill whence Moses saw the promised land and died.

Jordan, A river that was made dry while the people went over into Canaan.

Jericho, The first city which the Israelites took in Canaan, and the walls of it fell down at the sound of the trumpets of rams horns.

Shiloh, The place where the tabernacle of God stood some hundreds of years after the Israelites came into Canaan.

The Great Sea, That which is now called the Mediterranean, or the Levant sea, which washes the western shore of the land of Canaan.

Philistia, A country of Canaan, where many giants dwelt, and people which were very troublesome enemies to Israel.

Jerusalem, The chief city of the Jews; and it was called the holy city.

Tyre, The chief city of merchandize in ancient times, not far from the Jews country.

Zion, The hill at Jerusalem where David placed the tabernacle of God.

Moriah, The hill where Abraham offered his son Isaac, and on which Solomon built the temple of God at Jerusalem.

Samaria, The city where many of the kings of Israel kept their court.

Lebanon, A hill on which grew a multitude of tall cedars.

Assyria, A large country north of Judea, whose kings carried the Israelites captive.

Babylon, The chief city in the world, and an enemy to Israel.

Nineveh, The great city where Jonah prophesied.

Euphrates, A great river near Babylon.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Bethlehem, A town in Judea, where Jesus was born.

Judea, The chief part of the country of the Jews.

Nazareth, A town in Galilee, where Jesus was brought up.

Galilee, The meanest part of the country of the Jews, and furthest from Jerusalem.

The Sea of Tiberias, A sea encompassed with land in Galilee, in the midst of the towns of Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, &c. where Christ spent much time with his disciples.

Calvary or Golgotha, The hill where Christ was nailed to the cross.

Olivet, A hill near Jerusalem, whence Christ ascended to heaven.

Damascus, A city in Syria, whence Paul escaped by being let down from the wall in a basket.

Antioch, A city in Syria, where the disciples were first called christians.

Rome, The city that ruled over the world in our Saviour's time and since.

Greece, The country of the greatest learning among the heathens.

Athens, A city in Greece, the chief in the world for learning.

Corinth, A famous city in Greece, where Christ had many converts.

Asia, A country between Greece and Canaan, where there were many christian churches.

Lystra, A town in Asia, where Paul healed a cripple, and the people thought him to be a God.

Melita, The island where Paul was saved in shipwreck.

Patmos, The place where John was banished when he wrote the Revelation.

SECTION XIII.

NAMES OF TIMES AND THINGS, &C. REMARKABLE.

The Ark of Noah, A great vessel or kind of ship, which God taught him to build, to save his family and the living creatures in the flood.

Babel, The tower which men were building when God scattered them, by making them speak different languages.

Manna, A sort of food like seeds, which fell down from heaven every night, to maintain the Israelites forty years in the wilderness.

Ark of the Covenant, A chest of wood covered with gold, wherein the two tables of the law were kept, which were written by the hand of God.

The Mercy-seat, The golden cover of the ark on which God dwelt in a bright cloud.

Cherubs, The figure of creatures with wings to represent angels, between which God dwelt upon the mercy-seat.

Altar of Incense, A kind of solid table made of wood, and covered with gold.

Incense, A sort of perfume burned on the altar of incense to make a sweet smoke.

Shew-bread, Twelve cakes set on a golden table in the tabernacle, fresh every week.

Altar of Burnt-offering, Was made of wood covered with brass, where the sacrifice

was burned; and the fire which came down from heaven was kept always burning there for holy uses.

Sacrifices, Some were offerings of corn, or wine, or oil: Others were of living creatures, birds or beasts: Some were designed to be thank-offerings for mercies received, others were to atone or answer for the sins of men.

Laver, A large vessel of brass, containing a vast quantity of water for the priests to wash and purify themselves.

The Ephod, A short vest or waistcoat without sleeves, for the high-priest; on which was the breast-plate, with the names of the children of Israel.

Urim and Thummim, Something on the breast-plate by which God gave answers to the high-priest when he enquired in doubtful cases.

Mitre, A peculiar cap for the high-priest.

Tabernacle, A moveable building made of boards and curtains, in which the holy things were kept, and where God was worshipped.

The Holy Place, The outer part of the tabernacle, where the common priests went to burn incense daily. There stood the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the altar of incense.

Most Holy Place, The inner part of the tabernacle where the ark stood, and into which only the high-priest entered, and that but once a year.

The Veil, A curtain which divided the holy place from the most holy.

Court of the Tabernacle, A large court round about the tabernacle, inclosed with a row of pillars and curtains on the four sides: There stood the altar of burnt-offering and the laver.

Sabbath-day, Every seventh day, appointed as a day of rest from worldly business.

Sabbatical Year, Every seventh year, when the land was neither plowed nor sowed.

Passover, A feast upon the sacrifice of a lamb, appointed yearly in remembrance of God's passing over the families of Israel, when he destroyed all the first-born of Egypt.

Pentecost, A feast kept in remembrance of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, and also in thanksgiving at the beginning of wheat-harvest every year.

Feast of Tabernacles, A feast kept towards the end of the year, wherein the Jews dwelt in booths made of boughs of trees, to keep in remembrance their dwelling in booths or tents in the wilderness.

Jubilee, One year in fifty, when the debtors and servants were all released.

The Temple, A glorious building raised by king Solomon for the worship of God, and wherein God dwelt, as he did before in the tabernacle.

Sanctuary, The tabernacle or the temple.

Feast of Purim, A feast appointed to give thanks to God for the deliverance of the Jews, from a general murder in their captivity, by the intercession of queen Esther.

Feast of the Dedication, Kept in remembrance of the building or restoration of the temple, and dedication of it to God.

Synagogues, Places built in several parts of the land of Canaan, and in other countries, for the Jews to meet in, and worship God.

Phylacteries, Strips of parchment with some sentence of the law written on it, and worn on the garments of the Jews.

Church, A larger or lesser collection of people who profess the true religion; as the church of the Jews of old; *Acts* vii. 38. *Matt.* xviii. 17. The christian church; *Matt.*

xvi. 18. *Eph.* v. 24. The churches of Asia; *Rev.* i. 11. The church in Philemon's house; *Phil.* verse 2.

Lord's-day; Rev. i. 10. The first day of the week, whereon Christ arose from the dead, and which was appointed for public worship among christians.

Baptism, Washing with water, in token of regeneration and remission of sins.

The Lord's-supper, Eating and drinking bread and wine in the church in remembrance of the death of Christ.

SECTION XIV.

HEBREW OR SYRIAC WORDS, &C. USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Raca, A lesser term of reproach, meaning a vain or worthless fellow; whereas the word fool signified a vile wicked fellow; *Matt.* v. 22.

Rabbi, A title of honour given to the jewish doctors or teachers of the law.

Abba, Signifies father.

Corban, A gift dedicated to God.

Anathema maranatha, Accursed till the Lord come.

The Lord of Sabaoth, The Lord of hosts.

Hallelujah, The song of praise to God.

Hosanna, The song of salvation to Christ.

Amen, A hearty consent to what is said, or a wish that it may be so as is desired.

SECTION XV.

THE NAMES OF SEVERAL OF THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE.

Note, *The five first books are written by Moses.*

Genesis, An account of the beginning of all things, the creation of the world, the generations of Adam and Noah, and the family of Abraham.

Exodus, An account of the Israelites going out of Egypt, and the giving the law, and the building of the tabernacle.

Leviticus, The account of sacrifices and other holy things to be performed by the family of Levi.

Numbers, The register and ranks and order of the tribes of Israel, with an account of some events that fell out in their travels.

Deuteronomy, A repetition of the law, and of many other things in the former books of Moses.

Chronicles, An account of the generations of men from the beginning of the world, but chiefly of the kings of Judah and Israel.

Psalms, Holy songs chiefly written by David.

Proverbs, The wise sayings of Solomon.

Ecclesiastes, The preacher, the reflections of Solomon after his sins.

The Prophecies, The writings of the several prophets.

The Gospel of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*, the history of the life and doctrine, and death and resurrection of Christ, written by those holy men.

The Acts of the holy Apostles, The history of what was done by the apostles, chiefly Peter and Paul.

The Epistles, Letters written by the apostles to the churches of christians, or to single persons.

The Revelation, The visions of the apostle John, relating to the church of Christ in following ages, even to the end of the world.

Note, The names of the rest of the books of scripture are borrowed chiefly either from the name of the person who wrote them, as the Prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the lesser prophets; the Epistles of Peter, John, James, and Jude, or of the persons whose history is related in them, as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Esther, Job, &c. or the persons for whom they were written, as the Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, to Timothy, Titus, &c. But the occasion of writing the prophecies and epistles, as well as the things contained in them, are so particular, and so various, that children can never be acquainted with them all, and there are many which are above the reach of their understanding.

A

SHORT VIEW

OF THE

WHOLE SCRIPTURE HISTORY:

WITH

A CONTINUATION OF THE JEWISH AFFAIRS,

FROM THE

OLD TESTAMENT, TILL THE TIME OF CHRIST.

AND

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CHIEF PROPHECIES THAT RELATE TO HIM.

REPRESENTED

IN A WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

THE PREFACE,

SHEWING

THE DESIGN OF SUCH A SHORT VIEW OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY,

AND THE ADVANTAGES OF IT.

THE Holy Scripture is divided into two books, which are commonly called the Old Testament and the New. And as each of these books contains several articles or propositions which God has revealed to men for the direction of their faith and practice in the successive ages of the world, so there are several histories also contained in them, or narratives of the life and death of men, of the affairs of nations, and especially of the transactions of God with mankind.

Some knowledge of these historical matters is necessary and useful, in order to obtain a more clear and full acquaintance with the principles of our holy religion, as well as to assist and engage us in the practice of it by way of motive. It is the history all along introduces the peculiar doctrine and duties; and all the later revelations of the mind and will of God, relating to religion, have some connexion with and dependence upon the events which went before.

The very gospel of Christ consists partly in the history of his life and death; nor can the other part of it, *viz.* the doctrines and duties, be so well understood without some knowledge of the law of Moses, the ceremonies of the Jews, the religion of the patriarchs, and the transactions of God with Adam the first father of all mankind.

The great and blessed God at one single view surveys all his own works and designs from the beginning to the end of them, and every part of his grand scheme stands in a delightful harmony with the rest. He has ordained all his more early dealings with men in such a manner, as to let in divine light by several gradations upon a dark world, and to lay a happy foundation for his latest and best revelation made by his own Son and apostles: And in many cases the former laws, ordinances, and transactions, are evidently designed to prefigure and shadow out, as well as to introduce those which follow. Adam our first father, by whom sin and death were brought into the world, was a type or figure of Jesus the second Adam, who brought in righteousness and life; *Rom.* v. 14. 1 *Cor.* xv. 21, 22, 45, 49. The law of Moses was a shadow of the good things which were to come; but the body and substance of these blessings was given us by Christ our Saviour; *Col.* ii. 17. *Heb.* x. 1. And it is certain we may obtain a more extensive and complete knowledge of christianity by our acquaintance with the sacred affairs of Adam and Noah, of Abraham and Moses, and the sons of Israel.

Besides, it is the history of the Bible which hath conveyed down to us the knowledge of those miracles and divine wonders which have been wrought by the prophets, the immediate messengers of heaven, to prove that they were sent of God: It is in this history we read those prophecies of things to come, together with the accomplishment of them, which stand in a beautiful connexion from the beginning of the world to the

days of the Messiah. All of them join to confirm our faith in the several revelations of religion which God has made to the sons of men; and all concur to establish the last and noblest scheme of religion, that is, christianity. Thus the very history of scripture has a powerful and rational influence to establish our belief of the gospel, and to make us christians upon solid and reasonable grounds.

I add yet further, that in the historical part of scripture we read the holy laws of God exemplified in the life and practice of good men in several ages of the world: And when we see the rules of religion copied out in the words and actions of our fellow-creatures, it renders the performance of them more practicable and more delightful to us. While the word of command stands in the law to require our obedience, the actual obedience of our fathers to those commands recorded in the history invites our imitation, and makes the work more easy.

To conclude: We find not only the precepts but the sanctions of the law of God exemplified in the narratives of scripture. How often do we read the promises of God fulfilled in the rewards of the righteous, and his threatenings executed against wilful transgressors? These things set the government of God before our eyes in a stronger light; they shew us that his words of promise and threatening are not empty sounds; and make it appear with sensible conviction that he will certainly reward, and that he will as certainly punish. The many wonderful instances of a divine providence which concerns itself in the affairs of men, and which are recorded in the word of God, have a natural tendency to awaken our fear of so great and glorious a Being, and to encourage our hope and trust in him. In a word; the perfections of God, whereby he made and governs the world, are set before our eyes by the Scripture History in such divine colours, as give us a more awful and more amiable idea of God himself, than any words of description could have done, without such an historical account of his works of nature, grace, and providence.

Since then it appears that some knowledge of the history of scripture is necessary and useful to every one among us who would know and love God, and be a partaker of his favour, the next thing to be enquired is, how this knowledge may be best attained? How shall persons, whose capacity is weak, or who have little time to employ on these subjects, be led in the shortest and easiest way to a competent acquaintance with the sacred history? And how shall those who are young in years be trained up in the plainest and most alluring manner to some knowledge of these important affairs, till their growing age and further advantages shall give them a more extensive and capacious view of all the transactions between God and men recorded in scripture?

The Bible itself is a very large book, and though it ought to be read, at least many parts of it, by persons of all characters and conditions, yet the reducing of the several things contained in it to a short and narrow view, by way of abridgment, is so exceeding useful, that I had almost called it necessary, at least for youth, and for persons in the lower ranks of life, who have fewer conveniences and advantages of knowledge. I have made this sufficiently evident, with regard to the doctrines and duties of religion, in my discourse concerning the composition and use of catechisms, to which I refer my reader: And the same argument will hold good with regard to the historical part of scripture. There I have shewn particularly how needful it is to collect the great articles and rules of our religion, which lie scattered up and down in the Bible, into a shorter scheme for the use of younger understandings; and I have given my reasons also, why

the catechistical method of question and answer is preferable to all other methods of instruction; and I need not repeat the same things here, with regard to sacred history.

It is proper the reader should know, that at the end of the history of the Old Testament I have inserted one chapter, wherein the jewish affairs are continued from the time of Nehemiah, where the sacred writers end, down to the time of Christ and the gospel. This is borrowed from the best ancient writings we have of these events, *viz.* the books of Maccabees in the Apocrypha, and the History of Josephus, though I am greatly indebted also to Dr. Prideaux's historical connexion of the Old and New Testament, wherein these narratives are so happily reduced to a chronological order, and embellished and improved with many valuable hints from heathen historians.

And to render the work yet more useful in these days of infidelity, I have added another chapter, which I call a prophetical connexion between the Old Testament and the New, wherein the most eminent prophecies relating to our blessed Lord are set down in one view, together with their accomplishment; that younger minds may see how much this great Messiah or anointed Saviour was foretold and expected through all ages, and may have their faith of Christ built early upon a solid foundation. I have nothing more to add, but to acquaint the reader with the method I have taken in composing this work, and with the use that he should make of it. In framing this book, I have observed the following rules, *viz.*

1. I have proceeded, for the most part, according to the order of things, as they lie in the books of scripture; but still endeavouring to maintain some connexion throughout the whole history. Yet I cannot say I have always reduced things to that order in which they were transacted: For in several places I found that a strict observation of chronology would have intermingled too many incidents of different kinds, would have broken the scheme of things I had proposed, or interrupted the narrative of some particular event, and rendered the history much more unconnected and disagreeable to those for whom I write.

2. Though I have not been solicitous to insert every incident, and the name of every person contained in the Old Testament, yet I have omitted scarce any name or remarkable transaction which has been referred to or cited in the New, or has any connexion with the gospel of Christ, which is the religion of christians. It was not possible to insert all the particular narratives contained in the scripture, without making another book almost as big as the Bible itself: Whereas my prime design was to give an abstract or short view of the sacred history for the use of persons of such age, capacities, or conditions of life, as are not able to attend to much reading, nor gain a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the transactions of God with men.

3. I have added the chapter and verse of one or more texts of scripture to every answer that required it, that the reader might be invited to search his Bible, and there gain a larger and more particular acquaintance with those historical matters which I have briefly mentioned in a line or two. If young persons by this means are allured to grow familiar with the word of God, I am persuaded the advantage they may reap thereby will richly compensate all their labours in reading this historical abridgment of scripture, and all my pains in writing it.

4. It is all divided into chapters, and some chapters into sections with a new title to each. This will, in some measure, give a comprehensive view of the method and order

of the whole. It is evident that the catechetical form of question and answer takes off the tiresomeness of reading from younger minds, and perpetually allures their enquiry and curiosity onward by short answers, without that weariness which arises from many long-continued pages of mere narrative: And in the same manner a proper distinction of the history into chapters and sections, under different titles, renders the work of reading much more delightful by the frequent returning rests and pauses.

5. Since I intended it originally for persons of younger years, and the common rank of mankind, I have studied generally to use such words and forms of speech as are most plain and easy to be understood. It would not have answered my design so well, if I must have sent my reader too often to his dictionaries to enquire the meaning of hard words and latinized expressions.

6. Yet I have not so confined myself to the service of my unlearned readers, as to neglect all useful criticisms and occasional remarks to clear up difficulties, but have freely interspersed them throughout the whole book, so far as may inform the inquisitive, and give some hints to the more intelligent reader for the further illustration of some passages of scripture both in the Old Testament and the New. If there should be found any mistakes in drawing up this history, which might have been rectified by further consulting the writings of the learned, I would only mention one apology for myself; and that is, a great part of it was drawn up in the country, at a distance from my usual habitation, where I had no learned writings to consult, and was confined to my Bible alone. A friendly notice of any such mistakes might occasion a correction of them. Let me here speak a word or two more of the particular uses which may be made of this summary of sacred history.

It may not be an improper book to lie constantly in the nursery or the parlour, to assist the instruction of children, or the conversation of grown persons. And if this and other useful books were suffered always to lie in the places appointed for servants, especially in great families, it might be an allurement to them to employ some of their leisure in a profitable manner. The placing it in any room of usual residence may entice persons often to look into it, and lead them into an easy acquaintance with the various dealings of God with men from the beginning of the world. Nor can I think it would be a vain or useless employment for persons who are not furnished with better advantages for scriptural knowledge to read it over once in a year or two, in order to keep these sacred memoirs ever fresh in their minds. Half a chapter in a week would be no heavy task, and this would finish it in one year's time.

May the divine blessing attend this feeble endeavour of mine to diffuse knowledge of divine things among mankind, and to furnish families with useful matter for conversation, whereby they may be better secured against the temptations of loose and vicious writings and vain discourse, which give an unhappy tincture to the imagination in early years, and tend to defile and destroy the soul.

A SHORT VIEW

OF THE WHOLE

SCRIPTURE HISTORY, &c.

THE HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no history in the world so ancient as the Bible, nor is there any which gives us so early an account of things. The Old Testament begins at the creation of the world, brings us into acquaintance with Adam and Eve, our first parents, informs us of their state of innocence, their sin against God, and their being driven out of paradise; it recounts the first generations of men, and their multiplied iniquities, which provoked God to destroy them by a flood.

Then it treats of the character, circumstances, and conduct of Noah and Abraham, and of their families after the flood, enlarging most upon the household of Jacob or Israel, the grandson of Abraham, who, at the invitation of his son Joseph, went down with his family to dwell in Egypt, where they were enslaved by Pharaoh, the king.

The history proceeds to the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage by Moses and Aaron, and their being set apart to be a peculiar people to God. It rehearses the laws and statutes which were given them, together with their sins and punishments while they were in the wilderness, travelling to the land of Canaan, which God had promised them.

Then there follows an account of their conquest over the land of Canaan under the conduct of Joshua; their government by judges several hundred years; and after that there is a narrative of their four first kings, *viz.* Saul, David, Solomon, and Rehoboam. In his days the nation was divided into two kingdoms, which were called the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah.

There are also particular records of the government of these two distinct kingdoms under a long succession of their own kings, till they were both carried into captivity by the kings of Assyria.

After this, the sacred history relates the return of many of them, chiefly the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, into their own land, and their rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, and the temple of God, and the settlement of the affairs of the church and state by Ezra and Nehemiah, which is the end of the historical part of the Old Testament.

During all this time there is an account given of the several prophets and messengers which were sent from God on special occasions to reveal his mind and will to men: And there is also a larger and more particular narrative of the lives or transactions of some

extraordinary persons, several of which are much interwoven with the series of the history: But there are others which seem to stand separate and distinct; such are the affairs relating to Job, a rich man of the east, Jonah, a prophet in Israel, and Esther, the queen of Persia, to which I have added some account of Jeremiah and Daniel, the prophets, in distinct chapters.

At the end of these I have put in two chapters before the beginning of the New Testament, which contain an historical and prophetical connexion between the Old Testament and the New, of which I have given an account in the introduction to those particular chapters, as well as in the general preface.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF MANKIND BEFORE THE FLOOD.

1 QUESTION.

HOW came this world into being?

Answer. In the beginning the great God made heaven and earth, and all things that are in them; *Gen.* i. 1. *Exod.* xx. 11.

2 *Q.* How did God make all things?

A. By his powerful word; for he commanded, and it was done; *Gen.* i. 3, 6, 9, &c. *Heb.* xi. 3. *Psalm* xxxiii. 9.

Note, We are also informed in the New Testament, that God created all things by his Son Jesus Christ; *Eph.* iii. 9. and that his name is the Word of God; *John* i. 3. *Rev.* xix. 13.

3 *Q.* What time did God spend in making the world?

A. God, who could have made all things at once by his perfect wisdom and almighty power, chose rather to do it by degrees, and spent six days in making the world with the creatures that are in it; *Gen.* i. 31. *Exod.* xx. 11.

4 *Q.* What was his work on the first day?

A. He made light, and divided it from the darkness, and the evening and the morning were the first day; *Gen.* i. 3, 5.

5 *Q.* What did God make the second day?

A. The air or the lower heavens, which are here called the firmament, and the clouds, which are the waters above the firmament; *verse* 6.

6 *Q.* What did he do on the third day?

A. He separated the earth from the sea, and made the trees and herbs to grow out of the ground; *verse* 9—12.

7 *Q.* What was the work of the fourth day?

A. The sun, moon and stars, which were appointed to give light upon the earth, and to make our days, our months, and our years; *verses* 14, 19.

8 *Q.* What was the fifth day's work?

A. The birds and the fishes, which were both made out of the water; *verse* 20—23.

9 *Q.* And what was the sixth and last day's work?

A. Creeping things, beasts and man, which were all formed out of the earth; *verse*

24—26; and God blessed his creatures, and pronounced his works all very good; *verses* 28, 31.

10 *Q.* What did God do the seventh day?

A. God rested from his work of creation, and set apart the seventh day for a holy sabbath or day of rest; *Gen.* ii. 2, 3.

11 *Q.* Who were the first man and woman that God made?

A. Adam and Eve; *Gen.* v. 1, 2. 1 *Cor.* xv. 45. *Gen.* iii. 20.

12 *Q.* In what manner did God make Adam?

A. He framed his body out of the dust of the ground, and then put a living soul within him? *Gen.* ii. 7.

13 *Q.* How did God make Eve?

A. He cast Adam into a deep sleep, and formed Eve out of one of his ribs, and then brought her to him to be his wife; *Gen.* ii. 20, 21, &c.

14 *Q.* In what state did God create them?

A. God created them both in his own likeness, in a holy and happy state, which is called the state of innocence; *Gen.* i. 26.

15 *Q.* Where did God put Adam and Eve when he had made them?

A. Into the garden of Eden, to keep it and take care of it, that even in the state of innocence and happiness they might have some work to be employed in; *Gen.* ii. 15.

16 *Q.* What was their food in that garden?

A. God gave them leave to eat of any of the herbs, plants, or fruits that grew there, except the fruit of one tree, which he forbid them to taste of, on pain of death; *Gen.* i. 29. and ii. 16, 17.

17 *Q.* What was the name of that tree?

A. It was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because as soon as man eat of it he would know evil to his sorrow, as well as he knew good before to his comfort; *verse* 17. and iii. 5.

18 *Q.* As there was one tree so dangerous that exposed him to death if he eat of it, was there not also any tree that would secure him from death?

A. Yes; there was a tree, called the tree of life, placed in the midst of the garden, whose fruit was able to have preserved him in life, if he had continued to obey God; *Gen.* ii. 9. and iii. 22. and it is reasonably supposed to be designed as a pledge or seal of eternal life to him, if he had continued in his innocency.

19 *Q.* What was the religion of Adam in the state of innocence?

A. The practice of all the duties toward God and toward creatures which the light of nature or reason could teach him; together with his observance of this one positive precept, of abstaining from the fruit of the tree of knowledge: And this was given him as a special test or trial of his obedience to his Maker. This is called the dispensation of innocence.

20 *Q.* How did Adam behave himself in this time of his trial?

A. He eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which God had forbidden him on pain of death; *Gen.* ii. 17. and iii. 6.

21 *Q.* How came Adam to disobey God, and eat of this forbidden tree?

A. Eve first was persuaded to eat of that deadly fruit, and then she persuaded Adam to eat of it too; *Gen.* iii. 12.

22 *Q.* Who tempted Eve to eat of it?

A. The evil spirit, that is, the devil, which lay hid in the serpent; *Gen.* iii. 1. 2 *Cor.* xi. 3. and for this reason he is called the old serpent; *Rev.* xii. 9.

23 *Q.* What mischief followed from hence?

A. As Adam sinned against God, so he brought in sin and death among all mankind who were his children, and they have spread through all generations; *Rom.* v. 12.

24 *Q.* Then God did not put Adam and Eve to death as soon as they had sinned?

A. No; but they were condemned to die, and became liable to sickness and death; they were driven out of the garden of paradise, that they might not taste of the tree of life, and they were appointed to labour hard for their food all their days; *Gen.* iii. 19, 23.

25 *Q.* Did God, who spared their life, shew them any further pity?

A. Yes; he gave them a kind promise, and clothed them with the skins of beasts, because they were naked; *Gen.* iii. 15, 21.

26 *Q.* What was the kind promise that he gave them?

A. That the seed of the woman should break the head of the serpent who tempted them to sin; *Gen.* iii. 15.

27 *Q.* Who is this seed of the woman?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in due time was born of a woman? *Gal.* iv. 4.

28 *Q.* What is meant by his breaking the serpent's head?

A. That Christ should destroy the wicked works and designs of the devil, and thereby save mankind from the sin and death which were brought in among them by his temptation; 1 *John* iii. 8. *Heb.* ii. 14, 15.

29 *Q.* Whence came the skins of the beasts with which God clothed Adam and Eve?

A. It is likely God taught Adam to offer sacrifices at this time, and that these were the skins of the beasts that were offered in sacrifice.

Note, Whether flesh was eaten by the religious families before the flood is uncertain; but it does not appear that God had given Adam express leave to eat flesh; *Gen.* i. 29. and ii. 26. and ix. 23. and then there could be no skins to be had from beasts killed for food. But the sin of man deserved death; and it was probably at this time that God appointed beasts to be sacrificed, or put to death, to shew that sin deserved death; and to make a sort of typical atonement, or answer for the sin of man, since cutting and burning God's living creatures does not seem to be a contrivance of man himself to appease God for his own sin.

Then it is natural to suppose that God clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of those beasts which were sacrificed, to shew them, in a typical or figurative way, that as clothes covered the naked body from shame and harm, so sacrifices offered according to God's appointment should in some sense protect them from the punishment which sin had deserved.

And it is very possible God might inform Adam that all these appointments were only a figure of Christ, the great sacrifice, the seed of the woman, who should make a real and effectual atonement for sin hereafter by his own death. I confess all this does not so evidently appear in the writings of Moses, nor could it be expected, where the account of things in these early times is so exceeding short; though it is very agreeable to the discoveries made in the following parts of scripture.

I add yet further, that sacrifices might be instituted at this time with this view and

design, even though Adam himself might not be informed of it; for the great God does not always immediately reveal to his creatures the reason and design of all his precepts or his providences; *Job* xxxiii. 14.

30 *Q.* What was the religion of man after the fall or sin of Adam?

A. All the duties of the light of nature, which were required before: And besides these, he was now called to repentance for sin, faith or trust in the mercy of God, expectation of the promised Saviour, and offering of sacrifices. This is called the adamical dispensation of the covenant of grace, and it reached to Noah's flood.

31 *Q.* Who were Adam's first children?

A. Cain and Abel; *Gen.* iv. 1, 2.

32 *Q.* What was Cain?

A. Adam's eldest son, and he was a tiller of the ground; *Gen.* iv. 1, 2.

33 *Q.* But what mischief did Cain do?

A. He killed his brother Abel, who was a keeper of sheep; *Gen.* iv. 2, 8.

34 *Q.* Why did Cain kill him?

A. Because his own works were evil, and God did not accept his sacrifice; but his brother's works were righteous, and God gave some token that he accepted him; *Gen.* iv. 4, 5. 1 *John* iii. 18.

35 *Q.* Whither went Cain when God reproved him for this murder?

A. He went out and departed from the presence of the Lord, and from his father's family, where God was worshipped; *Gen.* iv. 16.

36 *Q.* What were the posterity of Cain?

A. Some of them were famous for inventions of music and handicraft trades, but they are supposed to have neglected religion; *Gen.* iv. 20, 22.

37 *Q.* What other son had Adam?

A. Seth, who was born soon after the death of Abel, and several others after him; *Gen.* iv. 25. and v. 4.

38 *Q.* Did the children of Seth neglect religion too?

A. Religion was publicly maintained for some generations in Seth's family, for they distinguished themselves from the wicked sons of men, they prayed to God, and were called the sons of God; *Gen.* iv. 26. and vi. 2, 4.

39 *Q.* Did they grow degenerate afterwards?

A. All mankind grew so wicked, except a very few, that God saw it proper to manifest his righteous government, and his anger against sin, by destroying them; *Gen.* vi. 5, 6, 7.

40 *Q.* Who were some of the chief persons of Seth's posterity mentioned in scripture in those early times?

A. Enoch and Methuselah; Lamech and Noah were the most remarkable.

41 *Q.* Who was Enoch?

A. The man who walked with God, and pleased him in the midst of a wicked world, and foretold the judgment of God on sinners; *Gen.* v. 22. *Jude* 14, 15.

Note, When Enoch and Noah are said to walk with God, some learned men have supposed, that it does not only signify that they behaved themselves always as in the presence of God, and conversed with him by meditation and prayer, and walked in his ways, but that God appeared of old to these pious men as he did to Abraham, and

walked and conversed with them in a bodily form; and this was the original of that phrase, walking with God, to signify the practice of religion.

42 *Q.* What became of Enoch?

A. God took him to heaven without dying, as a peculiar favour and honour done to him; *Gen.* v. 24. *Heb.* xi. 5.

43 *Q.* Who was Methuselah?

A. The son of Enoch, and the oldest man that we ever read of; *Gen.* v. 21.

44 *Q.* How long did he live?

A. Nine hundred and sixty-nine years; *Gen.* v. 27.

45 *Q.* Who was Lamech?

A. Noah's father, who prophesied of the blessing that the earth should find in his son, which had been laid under a curse for the sin of Adam; *Gen.* v. 29.

CHAPTER II.

OF NOAH, ABRAHAM, AND THEIR FAMILIES AFTER THE FLOOD.

SECTION I.

OF NOAH AND HIS SONS.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Noah?

Answer. The righteous man who was saved when the world was drowned by a flood; *Gen.* vii. 23.

2 *Q.* How did God drown the world?

A. When mankind had provoked him by their sins, which were exceeding great; *Gen.* vi. 5, 6, 7. he broke up the fountains of the great deep under ground, and caused it to rain forty days and forty nights; *Gen.* vii. 4, 11.

3 *Q.* How was Noah saved?

A. In an ark, or great ship or vessel, which God taught him to build; *Gen.* vi. 9, 14, &c.

Note, Noah had warning of this judgment of God one hundred and twenty years before it came to pass; *Gen.* vi. 3. And as he was a preacher of righteousness, 2 *Peter* ii. 5. so we justly suppose he gave continual warning to a sinful world, while the ark was building; 1 *Peter* iii. 19, 20. *Heb.* xi. 7.

4 *Q.* Who was saved with him?

A. All his family, and some living creatures of every kind, *viz.* two of every unclean beast and bird, which were neither fit for food or sacrifice, and seven of every clean creature which were fit for one or both uses; *Gen.* vii. 2, 3, 13, 14.

5 *Q.* How long did Noah tarry in the ark?

A. At nine months end he sent forth a dove, which brought in an olive-branch, to shew him that the waters were abated: And at the end of twelve months and ten days he came forth, and the creatures which were with him; *Gen.* vii. 11. and viii. 5—13.

6 *Q.* What commands did God give Noah?

A. The offering of sacrifices was continued; *Gen.* viii. 20, 21. Flesh was given to

man for food, as herbs were before; *Gen.* ix. 2, 3. Blood was forbidden to be eaten, the blood of man was expressly forbid to be shed, and murder was to be punished with death; *Gen.* ix. 4, 5, 6.

Note, The religion of Noah was the same with that of Adam after the fall, in Chapter I. Question 30. with these few additions here mentioned. And this was the noachical dispensation of the covenant of grace, whereby all men from Noah to Abraham were to seek salvation, and whereby all besides the family of Abraham were to be saved, even all the heathen world, till they hear of Christ?

7 *Q.* What promise did God make to Noah?

A. That the world should never be drowned again, and it pleased God to appoint the rainbow to be a token of it; *Gen.* ix. 13—15.

8 *Q.* Was there no rainbow before the flood?

A. It is probable that there was no rain before the flood, for the earth was watered daily by a thick mist; *Gen.* ii. 5, 6 and then there could be naturally no rainbow, for it is made by the sunbeams shining upon falling rain.

9 *Q.* Who were Noah's three sons?

A. Shem, Ham, and Japhet; and they were the fathers of all mankind after the flood; *Gen.* ix. 18, 19. and x. 32.

10 *Q.* Who were the offspring or posterity of Shem?

A. The Persians, who came from Elam their father, the Syrians from Aram, the Hebrews from Eber, as is supposed, and particularly the Jews, with other inhabitants of Asia; *Gen.* x. 21.

11 *Q.* Who were the posterity of Ham?

A. The Canaanites, the Philistines, and others in Asia, and the Egyptians, with other inhabitants of Africa; *Gen.* x. 6—20.

12 *Q.* Who were the posterity of Japhet?

A. Gomer, supposed to be the father of the Germans, Javan, of the Greeks, Meshech, of the Muscovites, and other families that dwelt in Europe; *Gen.* x. 2.

13 *Q.* Wherein did Ham, the father of the Canaanites, do amiss?

A. He saw his father Noah naked, and made sport with him, and he was cursed under the name of his son Canaan; *Gen.* ix. 21, 25.

Note, It is probable that Canaan joined with his father Ham, in the mockery of his grandfather Noah, and therefore he was cursed: And besides, this gave early notice to the Israelites, that the Canaanites, whose land God gave them to possess, were a people under an ancient curse.

14 *Q.* What did Shem and Japhet do on this occasion?

A. They covered their father with a garment, and concealed his shame, and were blessed; *Gen.* ix. 23, 26, 27.

15 *Q.* Did mankind freely divide themselves after the flood into several nations?

A. No; but being all of one language, they agreed rather to build a chief city with a tower, that all men might be joined in one nation or kingdom; *Gen.* xi. 4.

16 *Q.* How did God scatter them abroad into different nations?

A. By making them speak different languages, and then they ceased to build their tower, which was called Babylon, or confusion; *Gen.* xi. 7—9.

17 *Q.* Did God preserve the true religion in any of their families?

A. It is supposed to have been chiefly preserved in the family of Shem, for God is called the Lord God of Shem; *Gen.* ix. 26.

Note, Though the knowledge of the true God and religion were chiefly preserved in the family of Shem, yet it is evident that some branches of Ham's family, and probably of Japhet's too, preserved it for some hundreds of years; for Melchisedeck, a king of the Canaanites in Abraham's time, was a priest of the Most High God, and Abimelech, a king of the Philistines, feared God, and had a sense of religion, and both these are derived from Ham.

SECTION II.

OF ABRAHAM AND LOT, ISHMAEL AND ISAAC.

18 *Q.* Who was the most famous man of Shem's posterity in these early ages?

A. Abraham, the son of Terah, of the posterity of Eber; *Gen.* xi. 27.

19 *Q.* What was the first remarkable thing recorded of Abraham?

A. He left his own native country to go wheresoever God called him; *Gen.* xii. 1, 4.

20 *Q.* Whence did Abraham come, and whither did he go?

A. He came first from Chaldea, then from Haran, and he went to dwell among strangers in the land of Canaan; *Gen.* xi. 31. and xii. 5. *Heb.* xi. 8, 9.

21 *Q.* Who came with Abraham into Canaan?

A. Lot, his brother's son; and they brought with them all their substance and their household; *Gen.* xii. 5.

22 *Q.* Did they continue to dwell together?

A. Their cattle and servants grew so numerous, that they parted for fear of quarrelling, and Abraham gave Lot his choice to go to the east or the west; *Gen.* xiii. 1—9.

23 *Q.* Where did Lot sojourn?

A. He chose the east, and pitched his tent towards Sodom, because it was a well-watered and fruitful country; *verse* 10—12.

24 *Q.* What calamity befel Lot here?

A. He was carried away captive, together with other inhabitants of Sodom, when the king of Sodom was routed in battle by his enemies; *Gen.* xiv. 12.

25 *Q.* What did Abraham do on this occasion?

A. He armed his own servants, three hundred and eighteen men, who pursued the conquerors and routed them, and brought back Lot and the other captives with their goods; *Gen.* xiv. 14—16.

26 *Q.* When Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, what honour was done him?

A. Melchisedeck, the king of Salem, and the priest of the Most High God, met him, and pronounced a blessing upon him; *Gen.* xiv. 18—20.

27 *Q.* What civility did the king of Sodom shew Abraham?

A. He offered him all the goods that Abraham had recovered from the former conquerors, but Abraham refused to accept them; *verse* 21—24.

28 *Q.* What became of Sodom afterward?

A. It was burned by fire and brimstone from heaven, together with Gomorrah and other cities, because of the abominable wickedness of their inhabitants; *Gen.* xix. 24.

29 *Q.* Was there nobody to plead with God to spare them?

A. Yes; Abraham pleaded with God to spare Sodom, and God would have done it, had there been but ten righteous men in all the city; *Gen.* xviii. 23—33.

30 *Q.* How did Lot escape?

A. The two angels which were sent to destroy Sodom persuaded him to fly away with his family first; *Gen.* xix. 15.

31 *Q.* How many of his family escaped this judgment?

A. Only himself and his two daughters, for his two sons-in-law refused to remove; *Gen.* xix. 14.

32 *Q.* What became of Lot's wife?

A. She went with him part of the way, but when she looked back, hankering after Sodom, she was struck dead immediately, perhaps with a blast of that lightning which burned Sodom, and she stood like a pillar of salt; *Gen.* xix. 26.

33 *Q.* Was Lot a religious man?

A. Yes; and his righteous soul was daily vexed with the wicked conversation of the men of Sodom; 2 *Peter* ii. 7, 8.

34 *Q.* Did he maintain this righteous character ever afterwards?

A. He once was enticed into the sin of drunkenness, and then he let his two daughters lie with him and abuse him; *Gen.* xix. 30—36.

35 *Q.* Had Lot any children by this sinful action?

A. Yes; Moab was the son of one daughter, and Benammi of the other; and they were afterward the fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites, who proved to be the sore enemies of God's people; *Gen.* xix. 37, 38.

36 *Q.* Thus ends the history of Lot and Sodom: Let us return now to Abraham: In what part of the country did he dwell?

A. When he removed from Lot he went toward the west, and travelling on toward the south-west, he sojourned in the land of Abimelech; *Gen.* xx. 1.

37 *Q.* Who was Abimelech?

A. He was king of Gerar, in the country of the Philistines; *Gen.* xx. 2. and xxi. 32.

38 *Q.* What did Abimelech do at Abraham's coming?

A. He took Sarah, Abraham's wife, into his house; but being warned of God, he restored her again; *Gen.* xx. 2, 6, 14.

39 *Q.* How came Abimelech to take Abraham's wife?

A. Because she was a beautiful woman, and Abraham did not call her his wife, but his sister; and by this means he exposed her to be taken by other men; *Gen.* xx. 2.

40 *Q.* What sons had Abraham?

A. The two chief were Ishmael and Isaac; *Gen.* xxv. 9.

41 *Q.* What was Ishmael?

A. He was the son of Abraham by Hagar, his servant-maid; *Gen.* xvi. 15.

42 *Q* How came Abraham to take his maid to be his concubine?

A. God had promised him a son, and he thought his wife Sarah was too old to have a child, and therefore by her advice he took Hagar; *Gen.* xvi. 1, 2.

43 *Q.* What became of Ishmael?

A. Abraham, by the command of God, turned Ishmael and his mother out of his

house into the wilderness, because they mocked and abused his younger son Isaac; *Gen.* xxi. 9—21.

44 *Q.* Did Ishmael perish in the wilderness?

A. The angel of God appeared to Hagar, and shewed her a spring of water when they were dying with thirst; and Ishmael grew up to be a great man, and the father of a large nation; *Gen.* xxi. 16—20. and xxv. 16.

45 *Q.* Who was Isaac's mother?

A. Isaac was the son of Abraham by Sarah his wife, according to the promise of God when they were both grown old; *Gen.* xxi. 1—8. *Rom.* ix. 7, 8.

46 *Q.* Why is Abraham called the father of the faithful, that is, of the believers?

A. Because he believed the promises of God against all probable appearance, and was a pattern to other believers in all ages? *Gen.* xv. 16. *Rom.* iv. 11, 12.

47 *Q.* What were the three chief promises which God gave Abraham?

A. 1. That he should have a son when he was a hundred years old. 2. That his children should possess the land of Canaan, when he had not ground enough to set his foot on there. And 3. That all the families of the earth should be blessed in him and his offspring, when he was but a private person; *Gen.* xvii. 8, 16, 17. and xii. 3. *Acts* vii. 5.

48 *Q.* What did this last promise mean?

A. That Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, should come from his family; *Gal.* iii. 8, 16.

49 *Q.* What did God appoint to Abraham for a token of these promises and this covenant, and of his own acceptance with God?

A. He commanded him and all his sons to be circumcised in all generations; *Gen.* xvii. 7—10. *Rom.* iv. 11.

50 *Q.* What was the religion of Abraham?

A. The same with the religion of Adam after the fall in Chapter I. Question 30. and the religion of Noah under Chapter II. Question 6. with the addition of circumcision, and the expectation of Canaan to be given to his seed as a type of heaven, and a trust in the promise of the Saviour who should spring from him and bless all nations.

Note, This was called the abrahamical dispensation; but it was confined to the family of Abraham in the literal sense of it, with those temporal precepts and promises of circumcision and the inheritance of Canaan; though in the spiritual sense of it it reaches to every good man, and thus Abraham is their father; *Rom.* iv. 16, 17.

51 *Q.* How did Abraham further and most eminently shew his obedience to God?

A. In his readiness to offer up his son Isaac at God's command; *Gen.* xxii. 12.

52 *Q.* And did he offer him in sacrifice?

A. No, God withheld his hand, and sent a ram to be sacrificed in his stead; *Gen.* xxii. 13.

53 *Q.* What further favours did Abraham receive from God?

A. God visited him, and conversed with him as a friend several times in a visible manner, and changed his name from Abram to Abraham; *Gen.* xv. and xvii. and xviii. *James* ii. 23.

54 *Q.* What is written concerning Sarah, Abraham's wife?

A. She believed God's promise, and had a son at ninety years old, and her name also was changed from Sarai to Sarah; *Gen.* xvii. 15, 17. *Heb.* xi. 11.

Note, Some learned men have supposed that the addition of the Hebrew letter H to the names of Abram and Sarai, signifies a new relation to God whose name is Jah: Others think it to be a part of the word Hamon, which signifies a multitude, because God promised many nations to spring from them when he changed their names; *Gen.* xvii. 5, 16.

55 *Q.* What is recorded concerning Isaac their son?

A. He feared the God of his father Abraham, he had frequent visions of God, and went out into the fields to meditate or pray, and offered sacrifices to God; *Gen.* xxiv. 63. and xxvi. 2, 24, 25.

56 *Q.* Who was Isaac's wife?

A. His father Abraham sent afar, and took a wife for him, even Rebecca, out of his own family in Mesopotamia, because he was unwilling he should marry among the wicked Canaanites, whom God had doomed to destruction; *Gen.* xxiv. 3, 4, 51—59.

57 *Q.* What children had Isaac?

A. Two sons, Esau and Jacob; *Gen.* xxv. 25, 26.

SECTION III.

OF ESAU AND JACOB, AND THEIR POSTERITY.

58 *Q.* What was Esau?

A. He was Isaac's eldest son, bred up to hunting rather than husbandry, who sold his birthright to his brother for a mess of pottage when he was faint with hunting; *Gen.* xxv. 31, 33.

59 *Q.* Who was Jacob?

A. The youngest son of Isaac, who by his mother's contrivance obtained his father's blessing, though not in a right way; *Gen.* xxviii. 27.

60 *Q.* By what treachery did he obtain the blessing?

A. When his father Isaac was old and his eyes dim, by order of his mother he put on Esau's clothes, and told his father he was Esau his eldest son; *Gen.* xxvii. 15—19.

61 *Q.* How did Esau take this?

A. Esau threatened to kill him, and therefore he left his father's house; *Gen.* xxvii. 41, 43.

62 *Q.* Whither did Jacob go?

A. To Laban the Syrian, who was his mother's brother? *Gen.* xxviii. 2, 5.

63 *Q.* What did he meet with in going thither?

A. He lay down to sleep on a stone at Bethel, and had a holy dream of God, and of angels there ascending and descending between heaven and earth; *Gen.* xxviii. 12, 13, 14.

64 *Q.* What did he do in Laban's house?

A. He kept his uncle Laban's cattle, and he married his two daughters Rachel and Leah; *Gen.* xxix. 15—30.

65 *Q.* How long did he live there?

A. Twenty years, till he had got a large family of children and servants, much cattle, and great riches; *Gen.* xxx. and xxxi. 41.

66 *Q.* What did Jacob meet with in his return to Canaan?

A. He had a vision of God as of a man wrestling with him; *Gen.* xxxii. 24—30.

67 *Q.* Why was Jacob called Israel?

A. Because he prayed and prevailed with God for a blessing while he wrestled with him in the form of a man; *Gen.* xxxii. 28. *Hosea* xii. 4.

68 *Q.* How did his brother Esau meet him?

A. God turned Esau's heart, so that he met him with great civility, though he came out with four hundred men, as Jacob feared, to destroy him; *Gen.* xxxii. 6. and xxxiii. 4.

69 *Q.* What posterity had Esau?

A. A large posterity, who chiefly inhabited mount Seir, and were called Edomites, from their father's other name Edom; *Gen.* xxxvi. 8, 9.

70 *Q.* How many sons had Jacob?

A. Twelve, and they were called the twelve patriarchs, because they were the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel; *Gen.* xxxv. 22. *Acts.* vii. 8. *Num.* i. 4—16.

71 *Q.* What are their names?

A. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, the sons of his wife Leah: Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of his wife Rachel: Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah his concubine; and Gad and Asher, the sons of Zilpah his concubine; *Gen.* xxxv. 23—26.

72 *Q.* Who were the most famous of all these in sacred history?

A. Levi, Judah and Joseph.

73 *Q.* What is there remarkable concerning Levi?

A. The priesthood, and other things relating to the worship of God, were committed to Levi's family in following times; *Deut.* xviii. 2. and xxxiii. 8, 10.

74 *Q.* But did not Levi do a very wicked thing in killing the Shechemites?

A. Yes, he and his brother Simeon dealt very treacherously and cruelly with them, in slaying them after they had made a covenant of peace with them; *Gen.* xxxiv. 25—29.

75 *Q.* How did Jacob bear this?

A. He severely reproved them for it, and upon his death-bed, by the spirit of prophecy, pronounced a curse upon them, that they should be scattered abroad through all the land of Israel; *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. and xlix. 5.

76 *Q.* Was this curse executed?

A. Yes, in some measure, for the Simeonites as well as Levites had their possessions scattering among all the tribes of Israel; but the curse of the Levites was lightened by their having the priesthood given them; *Joshua* xxi.

77 *Q.* What is there remarkable relating to Judah?

A. He dealt very basely with his daughter-in-law Tamar, and committed shameful wickedness; *Gen.* xxxviii. 16—26.

78 *Q.* Did God forgive this sin?

A. Yes, God forgave it so far, as not to punish his posterity for it; for the kingdom and government in future ages was promised chiefly to his family; *Gen.* xlix. 10.

79 *Q.* What is there remarkable said of Joseph?

A. His brethren sold him for a slave into Egypt, where he became the ruler of the land; *Gen.* xxxvii. 27. and xlii. 40. *Acts* vii. 9, 10.

80 *Q.* Why did they sell him?

A. For envy, because his father loved him, and made him a coat of many colours, and because he dreamed that they should bow down to him; *Gen.* xxxvii. 3, 4.

81 *Q.* What was his first station in the land of Egypt?

A. He was a servant in the house of Potiphar a captain of the guard, and by a false accusation of his master's wife he was cast into prison, though he was entirely innocent; *Gen.* xxxix. 9—20.

82 *Q.* What was the occasion of his advancement?

A. He interpreted the dreams of some of his fellow-prisoners, and when the interpretation proved true, then he was sent for to court to interpret the king's dream; *Gen.* xli. 14, 25—32.

83 *Q.* And did this raise Joseph to be the ruler of Egypt?

A. Yes; he was thus advanced, because he foretold the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine which Pharaoh the king dreamed of under two different emblems of good and bad ears of corn, and seven fat kine and seven lean ones; *Gen.* xli. 39.

84 *Q.* How did Joseph carry himself toward his brethren in his advancement?

A. In the famine they came down to buy corn in Egypt, and bowed down to him according to his dreams; but he treated them roughly at first, as a great lord and a stranger, till their conscience smote them for their former cruelty to him; *Gen.* xlii. 7, 19, 21.

85 *Q.* Did he then revenge himself upon them?

A. No, but he made himself known to them with much affection and tenderness; *Gen.* xlv. 3—15.

86 *Q.* How did he manifest his forgiveness of them?

A. He sent for his father, and bid his brethren bring all their families into Egypt, and he maintained them all during the famine; *Gen.* xlv. 4—7.

87 *Q.* Did Jacob die in Egypt?

A. Yes; but according to his desire, his body was carried up to the land of Canaan, and was buried there in the faith of the promise, that his seed should possess that land; *Gen.* xlix. 29. and l. 13.

88 *Q.* What became of the families of Israel after Joseph's death?

A. They were made slaves in Egypt, and a new king, who knew not Joseph, sorely oppressed them, and endeavoured to destroy them; *Exod.* i. 13, 14, 16, 22.

89 *Q.* Did Joseph, as well as his father, profess any hope of his family and kindred returning from Egypt in following times?

A. Yes; he died in faith of the promise made to his fathers, that they should go and possess the land of Canaan; and therefore he required them, when they went, to carry up his bones, and bury them in the promised land; *Gen.* l. 24, 25.

CHAPTER III.

THE DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT, AND OF MOSES AND AARON.

1 QUESTION.

WHO delivered the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt?

Answer. God heard their cry, and delivered them by the hand of Moses and Aaron; *Exodus* iii. 9, 10. and xii. 31. *Joshua* xxiv. 5, 6.

2 *Q.* Who was Moses?

A. He was one of the family of Levi among the people of Israel, who was wonderfully saved from drowning when he was an infant; *Exodus* ii. 10.

3 *Q.* How was he in danger of drowning?

A. Pharaoh the king of Egypt had commanded every male child to be drowned; and when Moses's parents could hide him no longer, they laid him by the bank of the river in an ark or box of bulrushes; *Exodus* i. 22. and ii. 3.

4 *Q.* How was he saved?

A. The king of Egypt's daughter found him by the river, and pitied the child, and brought him up for her own son; *Exodus* ii. 5, 6, 9.

5 *Q.* Did he continue a courtier in Egypt?

A. No, for when he was grown a man he shewed his pity to his kindred in their slavery, and slew an Egyptian; which being known, he fled from the court of Pharaoh; *Exodus* ii. 11—14.

6 *Q.* Whither did he fly?

A. To the land of Midian, where he kept the sheep of Jethro, a priest or prince of the country, and married his daughter; *Exodus* ii. 14. and iii. 1.

7 *Q.* How did God appoint him to deliver Israel?

A. God appeared to him in a burning bush as he was keeping Jethro's sheep, and sent him to Pharaoh to require the release of Israel his people; *Exodus* ii. 1—18.

8 *Q.* What was his office afterward?

A. God made him the leader and lawgiver of the people of Israel; *Exodus* xxxii. 34. *Deut.* xxxiii. 4, 5. *John* i. 17.

9 *Q.* Who was Aaron?

A. He was brother to Moses, and he was sent of God to meet him as he was returning to Egypt, and appointed to assist him in his dealing with Pharaoh the king. *Exodus* iv. 14, 27.

10 *Q.* What was Aaron's office afterward?

A. He was made the first high-priest of Israel; *Exodus* xxviii. 1. *Heb.* v. 1, 4.

11 *Q.* How did Moses and Aaron prove to Pharaoh and to the people that God had sent them upon this errand?

A. They had power given them from God himself to work several miracles, or signs and wonders to convince the people of Israel, as well as Pharaoh, that they had a commission from God; *Exodus* iv. 1—10.

12 *Q.* What was the first miracle?

A. Aaron cast down his rod, and it became a serpent; and when Pharaoh's conjurers did so too, Aaron's rod swallowed them all up; *Exodus* vii. 9—12.

13 *Q.* What did Moses and Aaron do further to deliver that people?

A. Upon Pharaoh's refusal to let the people of Israel go, they brought ten miraculous plagues upon the king and upon all the land, by the authority and power of God; *Exodus* vii. and viii. and ix. and x. and xi. and *Exodus* xii. 12. *Psalm* cv. 26—36.

14 *Q.* What were these ten plagues?

A. 1. Water turned into blood. 2. Frogs. 3. Lice. 4. Flies. 5. Murrain among cattle. 6. Boils and blisters on man and beast. 7. Thunder, lightning, and hail. 8. Locusts. 9. Thick darkness. 10. The first-born slain.

15 *Q.* Were Pharaoh and his people willing to release the Israelites at last?

A. Yes, when they saw they were all to be destroyed, for there was not a house wherein

there was not one dead: Then they hastened them out, and lent them jewels and gold to adorn their sacrifices and worship; *Exodus* xii. 29—36.

16 *Q.* How great was the number of the Israelites that went out of Egypt?

A. Six hundred thousand men, besides children, and all went on foot; *Exodus* xii. 37.

17 *Q.* Which way did the Israelites bend their journey?

A. Toward the wilderness of the Red Sea, as they were guided by God himself marching before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; *Exodus* xiii. 18, 21.

18 *Q.* But did not Pharaoh and his army pursue them after they were gone?

A. Yes, they repented that they let them go, and pursued them to the Red Sea, resolving to destroy them; *Exodus* xiv. 5. and xv. 9.

19 *Q.* How did the people of Israel, who came out of Egypt, get over the Red sea?

A. When they were in distress, with the Red Sea before them, and Pharaoh's army behind them, they cried unto God, whereon Moses bid them stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. Then, at the command of God, Moses struck the sea with his rod, and divided the waters asunder, and the children of Israel went through upon dry land; *Exodus* xiv. 10, 16, 21, 29.

20 *Q.* What became of the Egyptians that followed them?

A. God troubled their army, retarded their march, and when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea again, the waters returned upon them, and they were drowned; *Exodus* xiv. 28.

21 *Q.* Whither did the children of Israel go then?

A. They went wheresoever God guided them by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire; and they moved and they rested according to the rest or motion of this cloud; *Exodus* xiii. 21. *Num.* x. 33, 34.

22 *Q.* How did the people of Israel, who had seen all these wonders, behave themselves in their travels?

A. At every new difficulty, when they wanted meat or water, or met with enemies, they fell a murmuring against God and Moses; *Exodus* xv. 23, 24. and xvi. 2, 3.

23 *Q.* How long was it before they came to the place that God promised them?

A. They wandered forty years in the wilderness for their sins; *Num.* xiv. 32, 33. See *Psalm* lxxviii. 13—55.

24 *Q.* What did they eat all the time?

A. God fed them with manna, or bread that came down every night from heaven, and lay all round the camp; *Exodus* xvi. 4, 15, 35. *Deut.* viii. 3.

25 *Q.* What did they drink in the wilderness?

A. Moses smote the rock with his rod, and waters gushed out in a river, which attended them in their journeys; *Exodus* xvii. 5, 6. 1 *Cor.* x. 4. *Num.* xx. 11. *Nehem.* ix. 15.

26 *Q.* What did they do for clothes during these forty years?

A. Their raiment waxed not old, nor did their shoes wear out; *Deut.* xxix. 5.

27 *Q.* Did Moses govern all this people himself?

A. By his father-in-law Jethro's advice, and by God's approbation, he appointed officers and judges over the people for common cases; but every harder cause was brought to Moses; *Exodus* xviii. 9—23.

28 *Q.* You told me that Moses was a lawgiver to the Jews or people of Israel, pray how came he by those wise and holy laws which he gave them?

A. He conversed with God fourscore days and nights in Mount Sinai, and there he learned them; *Exodus* xxiv. 12—18. *Deut.* iv. 9, 18.

Note, The people of Israel were not all called Jews until after the return from the captivity of Babylon, the chief part of those who returned being of the tribe of Judah: Yet in all later histories the Israelites are so universally called Jews, that I have sometimes used this name even in the earlier part of their history. It is plain that Moses was twice with God on Mount Sinai, and that forty days each time; for Moses coming down, and finding the idolatry of the golden calf, broke the tables of the law which God wrote first, and God called him up the second time, and wrote the law on new tables. See *Exodus* xxxiv. 1—5, 28.

29 *Q.* What token was there that Moses had been with God?

A. The face of Moses shone so, that the people could not converse with him till he put a veil on his face; *Exodus* xxxiv. 29—35.

30 *Q.* What sort of laws were those which Moses gave the Jews?

A. Moral laws, ceremonial laws, and judicial laws, and all by God's own appointment; *Exodus* xxiv. 12. *Isaiah* xxxiii. 22.

31 *Q.* What was the religion of the Jews or Israelites?

A. The same with the religion of Adam after his fall, of Noah, and Abraham, in Chap. II. *Q.* 50. with these additions given by Moses. Note, This is called the jewish, Mosaical, or levitical dispensation. And herein God may be considered under three characters:

1. As the universal Creator of all men, and as the Lord God and ruler of the souls and consciences of all, and of the Jews as a part of mankind: And under this character he required of the Jews all the duties of the light of nature, or the moral law, which obliged all mankind, as well as them, and that under every dispensation.

2. He may be considered as the God of Israel, or the Jews, as a church outward and visible, whom he had separated from the rest of the nations to be a peculiar people to himself, and so he prescribed to them peculiar forms of worship, and special ceremonies and rites of religion, as tokens of their duty and his grace.

3. He may be considered as the proper King of the Israelites as a nation, and as they were his subjects, and so he gave them judicial or political laws which relate to their government, and the common affairs of the civil law.

But these three sorts of laws are not kept so entirely distinct, as not to be intermingled with each other. It is all indeed but one body of laws, and given properly to that one people under different considerations: And on this account it is sometimes hard to say under which head some of these commands of God must be reduced. Some commands relating to their houses and garments, their plowing and sowing, and the prohibition of particular sorts of food, are naturally ranked under their political laws; and yet there is plainly something ceremonial or religious designed or included in them. Again, that which we call the moral law, or the ten commands, is for the most part the law of nature, but it has something of a positive institution, ceremonial or ritual in it. This is very plain in the fourth command of the seventh-day sabbath: But in this catechism it was not proper to enter into too nice enquiries on this subject. The three

branches of this distinction of the jewish laws in the main are evident enough, though they happen to be intermingled in some instances.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE MORAL LAW.

1 QUESTION.

WHICH was the moral law given to the Jews?

Answer. All those commands which relate to their behaviour considered as men, and which lie scattered up and down in the books of Moses; but they are as it were reduced into a small compass in the ten commandments.

2 *Q.* How were these ten commands first given them?

A. By the voice of God on mount Sinai, three months after their coming out of Egypt, and it was attended with thunder, and fire, and smoke, and the sound of a trumpet; *Exod.* xix. 18, 19. and xx. 1—18.

3 *Q.* Where was this moral law more especially written?

A. In the two tables of stone which God wrote with his own hand and gave to Moses; *Exod.* xxiv. 12. and xxxii. 15, 16. and xxxiv. 1.

4 *Q.* What did the first table contain?

A. Their duty toward God in the four first commandments. See *Exod.* xx. 3—11. *Deut.* v. 6—15, 22.

5 *Q.* What are these four first commandments?

A. 1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 2. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 4. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it.

6 *Q.* Is God's resting from his works of creation the seventh day the only reason why the Jews were required to keep this sabbath or day of rest?

A. This latter part of the fourth commandment, *viz.* The reason of the sabbath, taken from the creation, and God's resting on the seventh day, is entirely omitted in the rehearsal of the ten commandments in the fifth of *Deuteronomy:* And instead of it, the Jews are required to observe this command of the sabbath or holy rest for another reason, *viz.* because they were slaves in Egypt, and God gave them a release and rest

from their slavery; *Deut.* v. 15. Though it is possible both reasons of this command might be pronounced from mount Sinai, and only that mentioned in *Exodus* be written on the tables of stone.

7 *Q.* What did the second table contain?

A. Their duty toward man in the six last commandments; *Exod.* xx. 12—17. *Deut.* v. 16—22.

8 *Q.* What are these six last commandments?

A. 5. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. 6. Thou shalt not kill. 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 8. Thou shalt not steal. 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

9 *Q.* Were these ten commands given to the Jews only, or are they given to all mankind?

A. Almost every thing contained in these commands is taught by the light of nature, and obliges all mankind; the honour that is done them in the New Testament intimates this also. But there are several expressions in these laws, by which it plainly appears they were peculiarly appropriated and suited to the jewish nation in their awful proclamation at mount Sinai.

10 *Q.* Wherein does it appear so plainly that these laws, as given at mount Sinai, have a peculiar respect to the Jews?

A. This is evident in the preface, where God engages their attention and obedience by telling them, "that he was the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt." This appears also in the fourth command, where the seventh day is the appointed sabbath for the Jews: And in *Deut.* v. 15. God gives this reason for the sabbath, that he brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. It is yet further manifest in the fifth commandment, where the promise of long life in the land literally refers to the land of Canaan which God gave to that people. "That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Yet, as is before intimated, the citation of them by the apostles in the New Testament, as rules of our duty, doth plainly enforce the observation of them so far on the consciences of christians.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE CEREMONIAL LAW OF THE JEWS.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT was the ceremonial law?

Answer. All those commands which seem to have some religious design in them, especially such as related to their cleansings from any defilement, and their peculiar forms of worship.

Note, I have hinted before, that several of the political laws which were given to the Jews by God as their king, have something ceremonial in them, and they were designed to be emblems, types, or figures of some spiritual parts of religion. There was also

some part of their ceremonies of purification, and their rites of religious worship, which have a political aspect, and were prescribed by God as king of their nation. But I choose to rank all their purifying rites and their rules of worship rather under this head of the ceremonial or religious laws, because their forms of purification do more plainly and eminently typify or represent to us how much care the people of God should take to be separated and purified from every sin, and from the communion of sinners; and the jewish rites of worship represent to us, by way of type or emblem, that spiritual and evangelic worship which should be paid to God, especially under the New Testament, as the Lord of souls and consciences, as well as those blessings of the gospel which are brought in by Christ and the Holy Spirit, are represented hereby.

SECTION I.

OF THE CEREMONIES OF PURIFICATION.

2 *Q.* What were the chief rites or ceremonies appointed for purification or cleansing among the Jews?

A. Washing with water, sprinkling with water or blood, anointing with holy oil, shaving the head of man or woman, together with various sorts of sacrifices, and some other appointments; *Heb.* ix. 10, 13, 19. *Lev.* xv. and xvi. and xiii. 33. *Num.* vi. 19. *Exod.* xl. 9.

3 *Q.* What were those things or persons among the Jews which were required to be purified?

A. All persons, houses or buildings, garments, or other things which were set apart for the service of God; and all such as had been defiled by leprosy, by touching human dead bodies, or the carcasses of any unclean animal, or by other ceremonial pollutions. See *Lev.* xi. and xii. and xiii. and xiv. and xv. *Exod.* xl. 9—15. *Num.* viii. 6. and xix. 9, &c.

4 *Q.* How were the persons or things of the gentiles to be purified for the use of the Israelites?

A. The things which could endure the fire were to pass through the fire; other things were to be washed with water; *Num.* xxxi. 20—24. And the maidens were to have their heads shaved and their nails pared, before an Israelite could take any of them for a wife; *Deut.* xxi. 12.

5 *Q.* Were there not some things which could not be purified at all by any ceremonies?

A. All the several nations of Canaanites, and the males among other gentile captives in war who had refused the offer of peace, were judged so unclean and polluted, that they were all to be destroyed; *Deut.* vii. 1—4. *Joshua* vi. 21. and vii. 26. and x. 28, 30, 32, 40—43. *Deut.* xx. 13—17. And the houses and garments of the Israelites, where the leprous spots could not be taken away, were to be destroyed also; *Lev.* xiii. 57. and xiv. 45. and those Israelites in whom the leprosy prevailed were to be shut out of the camp as unclean; *Lev.* xiii. 45, 46.

6 *Q.* Were there any crimes of real immorality or impiety which could be taken away by any of those outward ceremonies of purification?

A. The mere outward performance of any of these ceremonies did purify the persons defiled no further, than to set them right in their political state, as subjects under God as

their king; and to cleanse them, as members of the jewish visible church, from ceremonial defilements. Heb. ix. 13. *The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth no further than to the purifying of the flesh.* But Heb. x. 4. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins;* that is, as they are committed against God, as the Lord of their souls and consciences.

7 *Q.* How then were the sins of the Jews cleansed or pardoned, I mean their real immoralities and impieties against God as the Lord of conscience?

A. They obtained pardon of God according to the discovery of grace and forgiveness scattered up and down through all the five books of Moses, and especially according to the promises made and the encouragements given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in general to all those who sincerely repent of sin, and trust in the mercy of God, so far as it was then revealed, and to be further revealed in time to come; *Exod.* xxxiv. 6, 7. *Deut.* iv. 29, 30, 31. *Isaiah* lv. 7—9. But this forgiveness is owing to the effectual atonement of Christ, which was to be made in due time, and which took away sins past as well as to come; *Rom.* iii. 21, 24, 25, 26.

8 *Q.* Did these outward rites of purification then do nothing towards the removal of their moral defilements or sins?

A. As their outward or ceremonial defilements were appointed to be emblems and figures of the spiritual or moral defilement of the soul by sin, so many of these ceremonies of purification, and particularly those by water and blood, were pledges and tokens to assure them that God would forgive sin; and they were also figures and emblems of the removal of moral defilement or sin from the souls of men by the atoning blood of Christ, and by the sanctifying Spirit of God, which is represented under the figure of clean water. See *Heb.* ix. and x.

Note, The following question perhaps might come in properly after the account of sacrifices: But having here enquired whether the ceremonies of purification did any thing toward the removal of the moral defilement of sin, I thought it as proper to introduce it here, as a kind of objection against the foregoing answers.

9 *Q.* But were there not some jewish sacrifices and methods of purification and atonement appointed for some real immoralities and wickedness, as, when a man had committed a trespass against the Lord, by lying to his neighbour, by cheating or robbing him, or by swearing falsely when he had found any thing that was lost, and withheld it from the owner? *Lev.* vi. 1—7. Is it not said, *he shall bring his trespass-offering to the Lord, and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him?*

A. This trespass-offering would set him right indeed in the sight of God as king of the nation, against whose political laws the man had committed this trespass; but it was never designed to free him from the guilt of this sin in the sight of God as the Lord of conscience, unless he repented of this sin in his heart, and trusted in the mercy of God so far as it was revealed in that day; for it is a certain truth, *that the blood of beasts cannot take away sin;* Heb. x. 4.

SECTION II.

OF THE HOLY PERSONS.

HERE the reader may take notice, that several things mentioned in this and the two following sections, *viz.* of holy persons, places, and things, are described in figures, to give a plainer idea of them.

10 *Q.* Having finished the rites of purification, let us enquire now what were the most remarkable things relating to their forms of public worship?

A. These five, *viz.* holy persons, and holy places, holy things, holy times, and holy actions.

11 *Q.* What mean you by calling all these holy?

A. I mean such persons, such places, such things, and such times and actions, as were devoted to God and his worship, or appointed for his special service; *Num.* xvi. 5. *Lev.* xxi. 8. and xxii. 15.

12 *Q.* Who might be called the holy persons among the Jews or Israelites?

A. The priests, and the nazarites, and all the levites; *Lev.* xxi. 1, 6. *Num.* vi. 2, 8. *Num.* viii. 14. though sometimes the whole nation are called holy; *Exod.* xix. 6.

13 *Q.* Who were appointed to be priests?

A. First Aaron himself, and then the eldest of Aaron's family, were appointed to be high-priests in succession, and the rest of his sons and their posterity were the priests, provided they had no blemish in their bodies; *Lev.* xvi. 32. and xxi. 17. *Exod.* xix. 30. *Num.* iii. 3, 4, 10, 32. and iv. 16. and xvi. 40. and xx. 25, 26.

14 *Q.* How were they made priests?

A. They were solemnly separated at first to the priest's office by anointings, and purifications, and sacrifices; *Lev.* viii. 6—36.

15 *Q.* What was the business of the priests?

A. Their chief business was to offer sacrifices to the Lord, to burn incense before him in the holy place, to kindle the lamps, to do the higher services of the sanctuary, and to instruct the people; *Lev.* i. 5, 7, 8. and ii. 2. *Num.* xvi. 40. *Exod.* xxx. 7.

16 *Q.* What was the office of the high-priest?

A. He was appointed to come nearer to God, even to enter into the most holy place, to do special services on the yearly day of atonement, to oversee all the public worship, and to judge among them in many civil matters as well as religious; *Acts* xxiii. 4, 5. *Lev.* xvi. *Num.* iii. 4, 9. *Deut.* xvii.

17 *Q.* Was there any work which the priests performed in common with the high-priest?

A. All the priests were to teach the people their duty, to assist in judging of civil and religious matters, and bless the people in the name of the Lord; *Deut.* xvii. 8—13. and xxi. 5. *Num.* vi. 23—26. *Mal.* ii. 7.

Note, The priests were appointed to give the sense of the law in civil as well as religious concerns, because the same God who was the object of their worship was also King of their nation.

18 *Q.* Who were the nazarites?

A. Men or women of any tribe who separated or devoted themselves to the Lord for a time by a particular vow; *Num.* vi. 2, 3, 4.

19 *Q.* What were the rules of a nazarite's vow or separation?

A. He was to drink no wine nor strong liquor, to come at no dead body, nor to suffer any razor to come upon his head, but let his hair grow all the time, unless he fell under some ceremonial defilement; *Num.* vi. 5, 6, 9—12.

20 *Q.* How was his vow to be finished or ended?

A. By shaving his head at the door of the tabernacle, offering a sacrifice, and burning his hair in the fire of it; *Num.* vi. 13, 18.

21 *Q.* Who were the levites?

A. All the tribe or family of Levi, for they were taken into the service of God instead of the first-born of all the tribes of Israel, whom God claimed as his own; *Num.* iii. 40. and viii. 13—19.

22 *Q.* Why did God claim all the first-born of Israel?

A. Because he saved them from the destroying angel when he smote all the first-born of Egypt; *Num.* viii. 14—18.

23 *Q.* What was the business of the levites?

A. To wait on the priests in their office, and to do the lower services of the sanctuary or holy place; *Num.* viii. 19. and iii. 4, 6.

24 *Q.* How were the levites separated to the service of the sanctuary?

A. By sprinkling water of purification on them, shaving their flesh, washing their garments, and the people laying their hands on them, as well as by several sacrifices; *Num.* viii. 6—16.

SECTION III.

OF THE HOLY PLACES, PARTICULARLY THE TABERNACLE.

25 *Q.* Next to the holy persons let us enquire what were the holy places?

A. The tabernacle in the days of Moses and the temple in the days of Solomon, each of which is sometimes called the sanctuary; *Exod.* xxv. 8. 1 *Chron.* xxii. 19.

26 *Q.* What was the tabernacle?

A. It was a sort of moveable building made of pillars and boards set in sockets of silver, and fine linen curtains embroidered with cherubs, and coupled with loops and tacks of gold, that the whole might be taken to pieces, and carried with them in their journeys. See *Exod.* xxvi.

Note, When Moses had received full orders for making this tabernacle, he came down from mount Sinai, and found the people had been guilty of idolatry in making a golden calf. Then it is said, *He took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, and afar from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation: And every one that sought the Lord went out to this tabernacle.* This is supposed to be a little occasional tabernacle, made like a small chapel for present worship; for God resided there at the door of it in the cloudy pillar, and Moses went into this tabernacle and talked with God there; *Exod.* xxxiii. 6, 7, &c. But when the great tabernacle was finished according to God's appointment, it stood not without the camp, as appears in the following question.

27 *Q.* Where did the tabernacle stand when it was reared up?

A. It stood within a large space of ground which was called the court of the tabernacle, one hundred cubits long, and fifty cubits broad; *Exod.* xxvii. 9—18. And all the tribes pitched their tents round it; *Num.* ii.

28 *Q.* How was the court of the tabernacle inclosed?

A. It was inclosed by a row of pillars on each side, with curtains reaching from pillar to pillar; *Exod.* xxvii. 9—18. and xl. 33.

29 *Q.* How was the tabernacle covered?

A. With four veils or curtains; one of fine linen, one of goats hair, the third was made of the skins of rams dyed red, and the fourth or outermost of badger skins to endure the weather; *Exod.* xxvi. 1—14.

30 *Q.* Into what rooms was the tabernacle divided?

A. Into the holy place where the priests entered to minister daily, and the most holy place where none but the high-priest entered, and that but once a year; *Heb.* ix. 6, 7.

31 *Q.* How was the holy place divided from the most holy?

A. By a curtain or veil of fine linen with various colours embroidered with cherubs, and hung on four pillars overlaid with gold; *Exod.* xxvi. 31, 32, 34.

32 *Q.* What was the temple?

A. A most glorious building of stone and timber raised near five hundred years afterwards by king Solomon instead of this moveable tabernacle; 1 *Chron.* xvii. 5, 11, 12. 1 *Kings* vi. 1, 2.

33 *Q.* But besides these holy places, *viz.* the tabernacle and the temple, was not Jerusalem called the holy city?

A. Yes, because God appointed the tabernacle in David's time to be removed to mount Zion, and because the temple was built by Solomon on mount Moriah, both which are included within the city Jerusalem; *Nehem.* xi. 1. 2 *Chron.* iii. 1. and 1 *Kings* viii. 1.

SECTION IV.

OF THE HOLY THINGS.

34 *Q.* What were the holy things?

A. There was a great number of holy things made of gold and silver, brass and wood, and fine linen, and other materials both dry and liquid, which were used in the jewish worship.

35 *Q.* What were the chief or most considerable of these holy things?

A. The ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat, the altar of incense, the table and the candlestick, the altar of burnt-offering and the laver, the priests garments, the holy perfume, together with vessels or instruments relating to all or any of these; *Exod.* xxxi. 7—11.

36 *Q.* What was the ark?

A. It was a chest or coffer made of wood and overlaid with gold, wherein the two tables of the law were kept, of God's own writing, with some other precious things which were afterward laid up there; *Exod.* xxv. 10—16. *Deut.* x. 1—5. *Heb.* ix. 4, 5.

Note, The rod of Aaron, which blossomed and brought forth almonds, and the pot of

manna which the Israelites lived upon in the wilderness, were both laid up in the ark for a perpetual memorial of those miraculous events; *Exod.* xvi. 33, 34. *Num.* xvii. 10. *Heb.* ix. 4. Though some learned men rather suppose these were only placed before the ark, and not in it.

37 *Q.* What was the mercy-seat?

A. It was the covering of the ark, and it was made of pure gold with a cherub of gold at each end of it, with their wings stretched out to cover the mercy-seat, and their faces toward each other, and toward the mercy-seat also; *Exod.* xxv. 17—21.

Note, A cherub is used in scripture to denote some angelic power under the figure of some strange animal: It is described always like a living creature with wings, and probably with cloven feet too; but whether it be rather in the shape of an ox, or of a man, the learned are not agreed: Perhaps it was sometimes nearer to one form, and sometimes to another.

38 *Q.* Why was the covering of the ark called the mercy-seat?

A. Because God dwelt on it as the God of Israel, between the cherubs in a body of light, or a bright cloud, and appeared there as a God of mercy, accepting their sacrifices and their prayers; *Exod.* xxv. 22. *Lev.* xvi. 2. *Num.* viii. 89. *Psalm* lxxx. 1. This light was called by the Jews the sheckinah, or the habitation of God, and sometimes the glory; *Rom.* ix. 4.

39 *Q.* Where were the ark and the mercy-seat placed?

A. In the holy of holies within the veil; *Exod.* xxvi. 33, 34.

40 *Q.* What was the altar of incense?

A. An altar made of wood, covered with gold, with a crown or ledge of gold round about it; *Exod.* xxx.

41 *Q.* What was done here?

A. Incense or perfume of sweet spices was burned and offered upon it every morning and evening; *Exod.* xxx. 7, 8.

42 *Q.* What was the table?

A. The table was made of wood, covered with gold, and had a golden crown or ledge round it, with golden dishes and spoons; *Exod.* xxv. 23—30.

43 *Q.* What was put on this table?

A. Twelve cakes of bread were set there fresh every sabbath, and it was called shew-bread; *Lev.* xxiv. 5.

44 *Q.* What was the candlestick?

A. It was made of pure gold like a pillar or shaft, with three branches on each side, and thus it would hold one lamp on the top, and six lamps on the branches; *Exod.* xxv. 31.

45 *Q.* When were these lamps dressed?

A. Every morning and every evening they were dressed and supplied with pure oil, to burn always before the Lord; *Exod.* xxvii. 20. and xxx. 7, 8.

46 *Q.* Where were the altar of incense, the table of shew-bread, and the candlestick placed?

A. In the holy place.

47 *Q.* What was the altar of burnt-offering?

A. It was made of wood, and overlaid with brass, with shovels, and fire-pans, and basons, and other vessels belonging to it; *Exod.* xxvii. 1—5.

48 *Q.* What was the use of it?

A. All the burnt-offerings and sacrifices were offered upon it; *Exod.* xxxviii. 1.

49 *Q.* What was one of the chief glories of it?

A. That the first sacrifice that was offered upon it was burned by fire from heaven, and that fire was always kept burning there for holy uses; *Lev.* ix. 24. and vi. 13.

50 *Q.* What was the laver?

A. A vast vessel of brass containing a large quantity of water; *Exod.* xxx. 18—21.

51 *Q.* What was the design of it?

A. For the priests to wash their hands and their feet when they went to do service in the tabernacle; *Exod.* xxx. 18—21.

52 *Q.* Where did the altar of burnt-offering and the laver stand?

A. In the court of the tabernacle under the open sky; *Exod.* xl. 29, 30.

53 *Q.* Having seen the holy things that belonged to the tabernacle, let us now enquire what were the priests holy garments?

A. The common priests had a vest called an ephod, and some peculiar garments of fine linen appointed them when they ministered in the tabernacle; but the garments of the high-priest were very peculiar, and exceeding rich and glorious; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 18. *Exod.* xxxix. i. 27, 41.

54 *Q.* What were the high-priest's chief garments?

A. These six or seven, *viz.* The ephod with the breast-plate and girdle of curious work, the robe of the ephod, the embroidered linen coat, and the mitre with a golden plate; *Exod.* xxviii. 4.

Note here, The common priests had such a linen coat and girdle, but not embroidered, and such a mitre of linen, but without a golden plate; *Exod.* xxviii. 40.

55 *Q.* What was the ephod?

A. It was a sort of short vest without sleeves, to be worn above all the other garments; it was made of fine linen, of blue, purple, and scarlet, interwoven with plates and wires of gold; *Exod.* xxxix. 2, 3.

56 *Q.* What was the breast-plate?

A. It was made of the same work as the ephod, of a span square, with twelve jewels set in gold, ranked in four rows and fastened to the ephod; *Exod.* xxxix. 8, 9, 10.

57 *Q.* What was engraven in those jewels?

A. The twelve names of the children of Israel, that the high-priest might bear them on his breast as a memorial before the Lord; *Exod.* xxviii. 32. and xxxix. 14.

58 *Q.* What was the urim and thummim on the breast-plate?

A. It was something whereby the mind and will of God were made known to the high-priest, when he enquired in cases of difficulty; *Exod.* xxviii. 30. *Num.* xxvii. 31.

Note here, On this ephod was the urim and thummim in the breast-plate, which are sometimes called the oracle, because the high-priest, by consulting this in any enquiry of importance, found the mind of God, and told it to the enquirer. But we know not now what this urim and thummim were, or by what signs or tokens, or in what manner the mind of God was made known on or by this breast-plate to the priests; whether the answer was given by a particular lustre on such letters on the breast-plate as spelled out distinct

words, or whether by a voice from the ephod, or from the mercy-seat, is not hitherto agreed by the learned, and their conjectures about it are very various and uncertain.

59 *Q.* What was the girdle of the ephod?

A. A curious linen girdle of embroidered work, to bind the ephod with the other garments close to the body; *Exod.* xxviii. 8. and some suppose it to have been fastened to the ephod.

60 *Q.* What was the robe of the ephod?

A. It was an upper garment woven all of blue, with wrought pomegranates, and golden bells hanging on the hem of it, to make a sound when the high-priest went into the holy place; *Exod.* xxxix. 24—26.

61 *Q.* What was the coat?

A. An under garment, closer to the body, made of linen and finely embroidered; *Exod.* xxviii. 4, 39.

62 *Q.* What was the mitre?

A. It was a cap of fine linen, with a plate of pure gold fastened on the fore-part of it with a lace of blue; *Exod.* xxviii. and xxxvi. and xxxix. 28, 30.

63 *Q.* What was engraven on this plate?

A. Holiness to the Lord, because Aaron was to bear the iniquity of their holy things, that they might be accepted before the Lord; *Exod.* xxxix. 28, 30. and xxviii. 36—38.

64 *Q.* Thus much for the holy garments: Now let us hear what are the sacrifices that were appointed, which are also numbered among the holy things?

A. All sacrifices were offerings made to God: Some were of corn, or wine, or oil; and others were offerings of living creatures, birds or beasts, which were generally to be slain: But all sacrifices must be perfect in their kind, and without a blemish; *Lev.* xxii. 19, 20.

Note, There is one single exception to this rule, *Lev.* xxii. 23. where a bullock or a lamb, which had no other blemish but some small natural imperfection or superfluity, might be offered in the case of a mere free-will offering, but in no other cases: The current language of scripture seems every where else to require sacrifices without a blemish, that some commentators think this text must be explained some other way.

65 *Q.* Where were these sacrifices to be offered?

A. In no other place but at the door of the tabernacle or the temple; *Lev.* xvii. 8, 9. *Deut.* xii. 13.

66 *Q.* But do we not read of Gideon, and Samuel, and David, and Elijah building altars, and offering sacrifices in other places?

A. This was not lawful to be done but by prophets and inspired men, or at God's express command.

67 *Q.* How were the sacrifices offered to God?

A. In some sacrifices the whole was burned on the altar; in others, a part was burned, and other parts were given to the priests for their subsistence: And in some sacrifices the person who offered them was allowed to partake also. See the seven first chapters of *Leviticus.*

68 *Q.* What was done with the blood of the living creatures that were sacrificed?

A. The blood was never to be eaten, but to be poured out or sprinkled according to God's appointment, for the blood is the soul or life of the beast, and it is blood that maketh atonement for the soul or life of man. See *Lev.* xvii.

69 *Q.* What was the design of sacrifices of corn, wine and oil?

A. These were called meat-offerings and drink-offerings, and they were appointed chiefly to give thanks to God for his mercies received.

70 *Q.* What was the design of killing and burning living creatures in sacrifice?

A. Some might be designed perhaps by way of thanksgiving, but most of them were to make atonement for sins or trespasses against the law of the Jews, or to purify the unclean from some ceremonial defilement; *Heb.* ix. 7, 13, 22.

71 *Q.* How could the killing and burning of living creatures make atonement for sin?

A. It is not possible, as St. Paul assures us, *that the blood of bulls and goats should* really *take away sins* committed against God as the Lord of conscience: But when a man among the Jews had offended God, considered as king of the nation, by some civil trespass against the laws of the land, God was pleased to accept of the suffering or death of the beast, instead of the death or suffering of the man: Or if a person fell into some ceremonial defilements, he was to be purified by the blood of a beast: And this was an emblem, or type and token that the sin of man deserved death, and that God, considered as the Lord of conscience, would forgive sin, and would accept of the sufferings and death of his Son in due time as a real sacrifice of atonement in the room of the sinner. See *Heb.* ix. and x. 1 *Peter* i. 19. and ii. 24. See Questions 6, 7, 8, of this Chapter.

72 *Q.* With what fire were the sacrifices burned?

A. With fire which came down at first from heaven on the altar, and it was kept always burning on the altar for sacred uses, that is, to light the lamps, to burn incense, and to kindle other fires in their worship; *Lev.* ix. 24. and vi. 13.

73 *Q.* Who were those persons that dared to use other fire in worship than what God appointed?

A. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, burned incense with strange fire; *Lev.* x. 1, 2.

74 *Q.* What was their punishment?

A. There went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them; *Lev.* x. 1, 2.

75 *Q.* When were these various sacrifices to be offered?

A. Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, and on many special occasions, as God revealed to Moses.

76 *Q.* What was the daily sacrifice?

A. A young lamb every morning and every evening for a burnt-offering, together with a meat-offering and drink-offering; *Num.* xxviii. 3—8.

77 *Q.* What was the design of it?

A. To keep the people in remembrance that for their daily sins they needed continual atonement and pardon, and that God required continual thanksgiving for his daily mercies.

78 *Q.* What were the weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices?

A. Such as were required on the several holy times, or the festivals and fasts which God appointed.

79 *Q.* What was that special sacrifice which was offered to make the purifying water, called the water of separation?

A. A red heifer was to be slain and burned without the camp, with her skin, flesh and blood, with cedar-wood, hyssop and scarlet; and all the ashes were to be gathered and laid up in a clean place without the camp; *Num.* xix. 2—10.

80 *Q.* How was the water of separation to be made?

A. Some of the ashes of the burned heifer were to be put in a vessel, and to be mingled with running water; *Num.* xix. 17.

81 *Q.* What was the use of it?

A. To purify persons, or things, or places, which were defiled by touching a human dead body, or the bone of a man, or a grave; *verse* 11—16.

82 *Q.* How must it be applied to the defiled thing or person in order to cleanse them?

A. Some clean person must take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon the persons and vessels that were unclean; *verse* 18. *Psalm* li. 7. *Heb.* ix. 13.

83 *Q.* After the water of purification, tell me now, what was the holy anointing oil?

A. It was a kind of liquid ointment, compounded of myrrh, cinnamon, and other rich spices, with oil-olive, by the art of the apothecary; and there was none to be made like it on pain of death; *Exod.* xxx. 23—33.

84 *Q.* What was the use of this holy oil?

A. All the vessels of the tabernacle were to be anointed with it, as well as Aaron the high-priest, and his sons; *Exod.* xxx. 26.

85 *Q.* What was the incense or holy perfume?

A. It was a composition of sweet spices with frankincense; nor was any to be made like it on pain of death; *Exod.* xxx. 34—38.

86 *Q.* What was the use of this incense or perfume?

A. Some of it was to be beat to powder and laid before the ark in the most holy place before the Lord; *Exod.* xxx. 36. And it was this incense of sweet spices which was burned daily on the altar of incense. See *Exod.* xxx. 7, 8, 9. and xxxv. 15. and xxxvii. 29.

87 *Q.* What is the last sort of holy things relating to the jewish worship?

A. The instruments and vessels which were used in their sacrifices, and in any other part of their religion; and they were made chiefly of gold, silver, brass, and wood.

88 *Q.* What instruments were made of gold?

A. The golden censer belonging to the most holy place; the vessels belonging to the table of shew-bread, *viz.* the bowls and dishes, and spoons, and covers; the vessels belonging to the candlestick and lamps, *viz.* the snuffers and snuff-dishes, &c. *Heb.* ix. 4. *Exod.* xxxvii. 16, 23.

89 *Q.* What instruments were made of silver?

A. Besides the hooks and fillets of the pillars of the court, and the sockets of some of the pillars, and of all the boards of the tabernacle which were of silver, *Exod.* xxvi. 19—25. and xxvii. 10, 11. there were chargers and bowls of silver offered by the princes for the use of the sanctuary; *Num.* vii. 13. and trumpets of silver; *Num.* x. 2.

90 *Q.* What were the instruments of brass?

A. Those which belonged to the altar of burnt-offering, *viz.* the pots, shovels, basons, and flesh-hooks, and fire-pans, besides the brazen grate of net-work; *Exod.* xxxviii. 3, 4. Also the common censers for incense were supposed to be vessels of brass fit to hold fire; *Num.* xvi. 17, 37.

91 *Q.* What were the instruments of wood?

A. The staves fitted for the golden rings to bear both the ark, the incense altar, and

the golden table, were all made of shittim wood, and overlaid with gold; *Exod.* xxxvii. 4, 15, 28. but the staves to bear the altar of burnt-offering were overlaid with brass; *Exod.* xxxviii. 6.

SECTION V.

OF THE HOLY TIMES, AND HOLY ACTIONS.

92 *Q.* Having surveyed the holy things of the Jews, let us enquire what were the chief of the holy times or days appointed to them?

A. The weekly sabbaths, the new moons, the feast of the passover, the feast of pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the great day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. See most or all these holy times prescribed in *Lev.* xxiii. and the several sacrifices belonging to them in *Num.* xxviii. and xxix.

93 *Q.* What was the weekly sabbath?

A. The seventh day of every week was a day of holy rest from all the common labours of life, and a day of assembling for worship, which is called a holy convocation; *Exod.* xx. 8, 10. *Lev.* xxiii. 2, 3.

94 *Q.* What special public service was done on this day?

A. The daily sacrifice was doubled; *Num.* xxviii. 9. and it is very probable that some portions of the law were to be read, and perhaps expounded, chiefly by the priests and levites, as was practised afterwards in the synagogues; *Acts* xv. 21. and perhaps also this might be done, at least in following times, on all days of holy convocation.

95 *Q.* Why was this day sanctified or made holy?

A. Partly from God's resting from the work of creation on the seventh day, and partly in remembrance of the Israelites deliverance and rest from their slavish labours in Egypt; *Exod.* xx. 11. *Deut.* v. 15.

96 *Q.* What was the feast of the new moons?

A. In the beginning of their months, which they reckoned by new moons, they were to blow the silver trumpets, and offer a special sacrifice; *Num.* x. 10. and xxviii. 11. 1 *Sam.* xx. 5. *Psalm* lxxxi. 3.

97 *Q.* What was the feast of the passover?

A. It was kept for seven days in their first month Abib, by sacrificing a lamb, and eating it in every family, in remembrance of God's passing over the families of Israel, when he slew the first-born in every house of the Egyptians; *Exod.* xii. 18—28.

Here note, That the first month of the Jews, for all the common affairs of life, which are called civil affairs, was Tisri, which in part answers to our September, and is the first month after the autumnal equinox; and it was always to continue so for civil affairs, as appears from *Exod.* xxiii. 16. and xxxiv. 22. and *Lev.* xxv. 8, 9, 10. But as to ecclesiastical or religious matters, the first month after the vernal equinox called Abib, which answers partly to our March, was designed to be the beginning of the year to the Jews, in memory of their great deliverance from Egypt.

98 *Q.* In what manner was the feast of the passover kept?

A. On the fourteenth day of the month they were to roast a lamb for supper, and to eat unleavened bread that evening and seven days after; *Exod.* xii. 3, 8, 19. *Num.* xxviii. 16, 17.

99 *Q.* Was there any particular worship performed on these seven days?

A. Yes, there were special sacrifices every day, a sheaf of the first ripe corn, that is, barley was now offered to God; and on the first and last day there was a holy convocation or assembly for worship; *Exod.* xii. 16. *Num.* xxviii. 16—25. *Lev.* xxiii. 10.

100 *Q.* What was the feast of pentecost?

A. Fifty days or seven weeks after the first ripe corn, or barley, had been offered to God, there was a particular sacrifice, and a holy assembly, and two loaves of the first fruits of wheat were to be offered; *Lev.* xxiii. 15—21.

Note, This was called the feast of weeks; *Deut.* xvi. 16. compared with *Exod.* xxiii. 16. It was a sheaf of barley that was offered at the passover, and two loaves of wheat at pentecost, both of them as first fruits. See Pool's Annotations on *Exod.* xxiii. 16.

101 *Q.* What was the reason of the feast of pentecost?

A. It was kept as a thanksgiving for the beginning of wheat harvest; *Exod.* xxiii. 16. and perhaps also in memory of the giving of the law at mount Sinai; which was seven weeks or fifty days after the passover, and their coming out of Egypt; *Exod.* xx. 1, 11.

Note, They went out of Egypt the fourteenth day of the first month; *Exod.* xii. 17, 18. from thence to the beginning of the third month is forty-six or forty-seven days, when they came to the mount of Sinai; *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. Then they purified themselves three days, *verses* 11, 16. and God gave the law the fiftieth day, and this feast was called pentecost, which in the Greek signifies fiftieth.

102 *Q.* What was the feast of trumpets?

A. The first day of the seventh month blowing of trumpets was appointed with peculiar sacrifices, and a holy assembly; *Lev.* xxiii. 24. *Num.* xxix. 1—6.

103 *Q.* What are supposed to be the two chief designs of this feast of trumpets?

A. 1. This seventh month having several holy days in it, it was a sort of sabbatical month, or month of sabbaths, and was to be begun with an extraordinary sound of trumpets. 2. This was counted the first month, and first day of the year for civil matters, as the other was for things religious, and was to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet. See Pool's Annotations on *Lev.* xxiii. 24. and xxv. 9.

Note, As the seventh day was the sabbath or day of rest from labour, so the seventh month was a sort of sabbatical month; the seventh year a sabbatical year, to let the land rest from tillage; and at or after the seventh sabbatical year, that is, once in fifty years, there was the year of jubilee, or release and rest from servitude or bondage; *Lev.* xxv. 2, 7, 8—17.

104 *Q.* What was the great day of atonement?

A. The tenth day of the seventh month was appointed as a general day of public fasting and humiliation, repentance and atonement for all the people; *Lev.* xxiii. 27. and xvi. 29. and *Num.* xxix.

105 *Q.* What was to be done that day?

A. This was the day when the high-priest, dressed in his richest garments, was to enter into the most holy place with the blood of a peculiar sacrifice, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat before the Lord to make atonement for the sins of the whole nation, and to offer incense on the golden censer. See several more ceremonies belonging to this day; *Lev.* xvi. Let it be observed also, that in the year of jubilee, on this great day of atonement, the trumpet of jubilee was to be sounded through the land, to proclaim liberty to all the inhabitants; *Lev.* xxv. 8, 9, 10.

106 *Q.* What was the feast of tabernacles?

A. At the fifteenth day of the seventh month, at the end of all their harvest, they begun this feast, and dwelt seven days in booths made of the boughs of trees; *Deut.* xvi. 13.

107 *Q.* What was the design of this ceremony?

A. To keep in memory their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, when they went out of the land of Egypt; *Lev.* xxiii. 39—44.

108 *Q.* How was this feast observed?

A. By peculiar sacrifices every day of the feast, and a holy assembly on the first day and on the eighth day; *Num.* xxix. 12.

109 *Q.* At what hour did their sabbaths and all their feasts begin and end?

A. The Jews counted their days, and particularly their holy days, from the evening at sunset to the next evening; *Gen.* i. 5. *Lev.* xxiii. 5, 32.

110 *Q.* At what place were the feasts to be kept?

A. At the place which God should choose for the residence of the ark and tabernacle; which was first at Shiloh, afterwards at Jerusalem, though the blowing of trumpets to proclaim the beginning of the year was practised in all the cities of Israel. See *Deut.* xvi. 16. and Pool's Annotations on *Lev.* xxiii. 24. 2 *Kings* xxi. 4.

111 *Q.* How then could all Israel keep these feasts?

A. At the three chief feasts, *viz.* the passover, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles, all the males were to appear before God in one place with some offering; *Exod.* xxiii. 14—17. *Deut.* xvi. 16.

112 *Q.* What was the offering they were to bring unto God when they appeared before him at these solemn feasts?

A. The tythe or tenth part of their corn, wine and oil, and the first-born of their cattle; but they themselves were to partake in eating of it; *Deut.* xiv. 22, 23. though the bulk of it was to be given to the priests and levites. See Chapter VI. Question 15, 16.

113 *Q.* Was it not dangerous for them to leave their own dwellings in towns and villages which bordered on their enemies country?

A. God promised them, that when they should go up to appear before him thrice in the year, no man should desire their land; *Exod.* xxxiv. 23, 24. which was a standing miracle during that dispensation.

114 *Q.* Having heard this account of holy persons and places, things and times, let us now enquire what were the holy actions?

A. All those actions may be called holy which were appointed to be a part of this ceremonial worship; but the actions relating to the natural worship of God, such as prayer and praise, are in themselves holy and religious.

SECTION VI.

THE USE OF THE JEWISH CEREMONIES.

115 *Q.* What were the chief uses of all these ceremonial commands?

A. These three: 1. To distinguish the Jews from all other people as a holy people, and God's peculiar visible church, who eminently bore up his name and honour in the

world; *Lev.* xx. 22—26. 2. To employ that people who were so much given to idolatry, in many varieties of outward forms and rites of religion, lest they should be tempted to follow the superstition and idolatry of the nations round about them; *Deut.* vi. 1, 2, 14, 17. *Deut.* xxix. 1, 9—18. 3. To represent by types, figures and emblems, many of the offices of Christ and the glories and blessings of his gospel.

116 *Q.* How does it appear that any of these Jewish ceremonies are emblems or types of Christ and his gospel?

A. 1. This appears from many places in the New Testament, where Jesus Christ and the blessings of the gospel are called by the same names. So Christ is called our high-priest; *Heb.* iii. 1. and iv. 14. He is the Lamb that was slain; *Rev.* v. 6. 1. *Pet.* i. 19, 20. Our passover; 1 *Cor.* v. 7. and sacrifice to take away sin; *Heb.* ix. 26. The atonement or propitiation for sin; *Rom.* iii. 25. 1 *John* ii. 2. His body is called the temple, because God dwelt in it as in the jewish temple; *John* ii. 19, 21. *Col.* ii. 9. 2. This appears yet further from the evident and intended resemblance which the scripture represents between several of the jewish ceremonies and the things of the gospel. The blood of Christ obtained eternal redemption for us, as the blood of bulls and goats cleansed and freed the Jews from ceremonial defilements; *Heb.* ix. 12—14. His blood is called the blood of sprinkling; *Heb.* xii. 24. to sprinkle or cleanse us from a guilty conscience, as the sprinkling of the blood of the jewish sacrifices purified the people; *Heb.* ix. 20. and x. 22. The most holy place where God dwelt of old on the mercy-seat is the figure of the true heaven where God dwells on a throne of grace; *Heb.* ix. 8, 24. and iv. 16. The high-priest's entrance with the blood of the sacrifice and with the names of the tribes on his breast into the most holy place, to appear before God there for the Jews, is a plain figure of Christ's entrance into heaven with his own blood to appear before God for us; *Heb.* ix. 12, 25. The jewish incense was a type or figure of prayer; *Rev.* v. 8. and viii. 3. The jewish sabbath or day of rest, as well as the land of Canaan, was a type of the rest and release of believers from sin and guilt, and from an uneasy conscience under the gospel, and the final rest of the saints in heaven; *Heb.* iv. 3, 4, 9, 10. This might be proved more at large by some other scriptures, where the jewish rites in general are called figures or shadows of the good things of the gospel; *Col.* ii. 16, 17. *Heb.* viii. 5. and ix. 1—14, 23, 24.

117 *Q.* Did the Jews themselves understand the spiritual meaning of these ceremonies?

A. Perhaps a few of them who were more enlightened might understand the meaning of some of the chiefest and most considerable types; but the bulk of the people can hardly be supposed to have understood the spiritual meaning of them: At least, the Bible gives us no intimation of it.

118 *Q.* How could they be appointed as types and figures of spiritual things, if the people who were required to use them in their worship did not understand the spiritual meaning of them?

A. 1. The jewish dispensation was the childish or infant state of the church of God, as it is described; *Gal.* iv. 1, 2, 3—11. Now, children are sometimes employed in several things by their wiser parents, the chief design and meaning whereof they understand not till riper years. 2. If these ceremonies were not understood by the ancient Jews to whom they were given, yet they might be designed as types and figures of Christ and the blessings of the gospel in order to confirm the religion of Christ and the gospel, when it should be afterward published to the world, by seeing how happily it answers these ancient types.

119 *Q.* Wherein doth this appear?

A. St. Paul does actually confirm christianity this way, especially in his Epistle to the Hebrews, by shewing how these ancient types and ceremonies are fulfilled in the gospel of Christ.

Note, As a prophecy is the foretelling of things to come in words, so a type is the foretelling of something to come in some real emblem or figure or resemblance of it: Now as there are many ancient prophecies which were not understood by the persons to whom they were first spoken, nor by the persons who spoke with them; 1 *Pet.* i. 11, 12. yet when they are fulfilled they come to be better understood, and bear witness to the hand of God both in the prophecy and in the accomplishment: So though types may be obscure when they are first appointed, yet when they are accomplished or fulfilled they are better understood, and shew the hand of God both in appointing the sign, and bringing to pass the thing signified.

120 *Q.* Can these things be said therefore to be fulfilled or accomplished in Christ, since the meaning of all these ceremonies or types is not yet known even to christians themselves?

A. The New Testament has revealed to us, and taught us to understand, the chief and most considerable both of the types and prophecies; but neither one nor the other are understood fully; and yet we make no doubt but the prophecies are or shall be accomplished in Christ; and why not the types also? Probably it is reserved as one part of the glory of that happy day, when the Jews shall be converted, that the rest of their prophecies, as well as the rites and ceremonies of their ancient worship, together with their accomplishment in Christ and the gospel, shall be more completely understood.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE POLITICAL OR JUDICIAL LAW OF THE JEWS.

1 QUESTION.

WE have had a particular relation of the moral and ceremonial laws of the Jews, say now, what was their judicial or political law?

A. That which related to their civil government as a nation.

2 *Q.* Who was their Governor?

A. God himself condescended to take upon him the title of their king, and he appointed various kinds of governors under him as he thought fit; *Judges* viii. 23. 1 *Sam.* xii. 12, 13. *Isaiah* xxxiii. 22.

Note, Since the same person was both their God, and their king, the tabernacle and the temple may be considered, not only as the residence of their God, but as the palace of their king also; the court of the tabernacle was the court of the palace, the holy of holies was the presence chamber, the mercy-seat was his throne, the cherubs represented his attendants as God, and the priests were his ministers of state as a king, the high-priest his prime minister, the levites were his officers dispersed through all the kingdom, the table of shew-bread, together with some part of the sacrifices which were given to the priest, did represent the provision for his household, &c. Whatsoever other governors

were made from time to time, either captains, judges, or kings, they were but deputies to God, who put them in and turned them out at pleasure.

3 *Q.* What did the political or civil laws, or commands, oblige the people to?

A. To many particular practices, relating, 1. To war and peace. 2. To husbands and wives. 3. Parents and children. 4. Masters and servants. 5. Food and raiment. 6. Houses and lands. 7. Corn and husbandry. 8. Money and cattle. 9. The birds and beasts. 10. The first-born of all things. 11. The maintenance of the levites and priests. 12. The care of the bodies and lives of men.

4 *Q.* What were some of the more peculiar laws about war and peace?

A. That they should make no peace with the seven nations of Canaan, but that they should destroy them utterly; and that when they went to war, every soldier who was afraid might go home; *Deut.* vii. 1—3. *Deut.* xx. 8.

5 *Q.* What were some of their peculiar laws about husbands and wives?

A. That a man should marry his brother's widow if his brother died childless; and that men were permitted to put away their wives by a writing of divorce; *Deut.* xxv. 5. *Deut.* xxiv. 1. and that adultery was to be punished with death; *Lev.* xx. 10.

6 *Q.* What were some of their special laws about parents and children?

A. The first-born son was to have a double portion; and that any child who smote or cursed his father or his mother, or was obstinately rebellious and incorrigible, was to be put to death; *Deut.* xxi. 17—21. *Exodus* xxi. 15, 17.

7 *Q.* What are some of their special laws about masters and servants?

A. Any servant might go free, if his master had maimed him; and an Israelitish servant, though he were bought with money, shall go out free for nothing in the seventh year: And if he will not go out free, his master shall bore his ear through on the door-post with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever; *Exodus* xxi. 2—6, 26, 27.

Note, This word for ever signifies till the year of jubilee, for all servants or slaves, who were Hebrews, were then to have their freedom, and return to their own lands and possessions in their own tribe. See *Lev.* xxv. 29—42. And this is the best way of reconciling *Exodus* xxi. 2, 6, with *Lev.* xxv. 40, 54. where one text saith, the servant shall go out free in the seventh year, and another in the year of jubilee, and the third saith, he shall serve for ever.

8 *Q.* What special laws had they relating to their food?

A. That they should eat no blood, nor the fat of the kidneys, nor any thing that died of itself, or was torn of wild beasts, nor any of the beasts or birds or fishes which were pronounced to be unclean; *Lev.* xi. and xvii. *Deut.* xiv. 21. And therefore they would not eat with heathens, lest they should taste unclean food.

9 *Q.* What were some of the laws relating to their clothing?

A. A man must not wear the raiment of women, nor a woman the raiment of men. They must wear no mixed garment, made of woollen and linen: And they were required to make fringes in the borders of their garments, and put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue, that they might look upon it and remember to do the commandments of the Lord; *Num.* xv. 38, 39. *Deut.* xxii. 5, 11, 12.

Note, In our Saviour's time they wrote sentences of the law on parchment, and put them on their foreheads and their garments; these were called phylacteries; *Matt.* xxiii. 5.

10 *Q.* What are some of their special laws about houses and lands?

A. That every seventh year the land should rest from ploughing and sowing, and God

promised to give them food enough in the sixth for the three years. And every fiftieth year, which is the year of jubilee, all houses and lands that were sold should return to their former possessors, except houses in walled towns; *Lev.* xxv. 2—17, 20, 21, 30—34.

Note, Every seventh year in which the fields were not to be tilled, was called a sabbath, or a sabbatical year: And after seven sabbatical years, that is, forty nine-years, was the year of jubilee in the fiftieth: Though some have supposed the jubilee to be the forty-ninth year itself, that so two sabbatical years might not come together: For in the jubilee it is plain there was to be no ploughing nor sowing, nor reaping, nor vintage; *Lev.* xxv. 11.

11 *Q.* What were some special jewish laws about corn and husbandry?

A. They were forbid to plough with an ox and an ass together: To sow their fields with seeds of different kinds: Or to make clean riddance of their harvest either of the field or of the trees, for the gleanings were to be left for the poor; *Deut.* xxii. 9, 10, 11. *Lev.* xix. 9, 10, 19. And any travellers might eat their fill of grapes or corn in a field or a vineyard, but might carry none away; *Deut.* xxiii. 24, 25.

12 *Q.* What were some of their peculiar laws about money, goods and cattle?

A. They might lend money upon usury to a stranger, but not to an Israelite. That a thief should restore double for whatsoever thing he has stolen; but if he stole cattle, and killed or sold them, he must pay five oxen for an ox, four sheep for a sheep, *Exodus* xxii. 22. *Deut.* xxiii. 19, 20. *Exodus* xxii. 1—9. But if he has nothing to pay, the thief shall be sold for his theft; *verse* 3.

13 *Q.* What special laws related to beasts and birds?

A. They were forbid to muzzle the mouth of the ox that trod out the corn, that so he might eat some while he was treading it: Nor when they took a bird's nest in the field with eggs or young ones, were they permitted to take the dam with them; *Deut.* xxv. 4. and xxii. 6, 7.

14 *Q.* What laws were given them about the first-born?

A. The first-born of man and beasts were devoted or given to God as well as the first-fruits of the trees and of the field; *Exodus* xxii. 29, 30. *Num.* xviii. 12, 13.

Note, The first-born of men were redeemed by the levites: The first-born of beasts were to be sacrificed, or some way put to death, if not redeemed; *Exodus* xii. 2, 12, 13, 15. *Num.* iii. 41.

15 *Q.* What were the laws about the maintenance of the priests?

A. The priests were to be maintained by the first-born of all cattle and the first-fruits of oil and wine, and corn, and they had a share in various sacrifices, *viz.* the heave-offering, the wave-breast, and the right-shoulder, &c. *Num.* xviii. 8—19.

Note, Heave-offerings were to be moved upwards and downwards towards heaven and earth. Wave-offerings were to be shaken to and fro, or moved towards the four quarters of the heaven: All this is supposed to signify an offering of them to God, as universal Lord of all parts of the creation, and who dwells every where.

16 *Q.* What were the laws about the levites maintenance?

A. They were maintained by the tenth or tithe of fruits and corn which God appointed for them; *Num.* xviii. 21, 24. And they had some cities and their suburbs given them out of every tribe; *Joshua* xxi.

17 *Q.* What were some of their special laws about the bodies and the lives of men?

A. He that killed or stole and sold a man, must die for it; *Exodus* xxi. 12, 16. And in all cases of real injury or mischief, life was to pay for life, an eye for an eye, a hand for a hand, or a foot for a foot; *Lev.* xxiv. 17—20. And this was the penalty of a false witness, who intended to bring any mischief whatsoever on another; *Deut.* xix. 18, &c. for the same was to be executed on the false witness.

18 *Q.* Was there no pardon for him that killed another?

A. If he did it wilfully, there was no pardon: But if it were done by chance, there were six cities of refuge in the land of Canaan appointed, to which the manslayer might fly and be safe. But he was bound to dwell there till the death of the high-priest; *Num.* xxxv. 11—33.

19 *Q.* Was the law the same for the servant or slave, and for the freeman, in case of maiming and of murder?

A. Not entirely the same; for in some cases of maiming or killing a slave, the offender was not punished to the same degree as if the injured person had been a freeman; *Exodus* xxi. 20, 26.

20 *Q.* What were some of the usual punishments of criminals appointed in the jewish law?

A. A fine of money or cattle to be paid, a cutting off from the people or congregation, scourging or beating at most with forty stripes, the loss of a limb, or the loss of life; *Exodus* xxi. 19, 22, 36. *Lev.* xix. 20. *Lev.* xxiv. 17—20.

21 *Q.* What is the meaning of being cut off from the people or the congregation?

A. In some great crimes, such as presumptuous rebellion against the laws of God, wilful sabbath-breaking, &c. it may signify capital punishment or death, by the hands of the magistrate; *Num.* xv. 30, 31. *Exodus* xxxi. 14. In some cases it may intend a being devoted to some judgment by the immediate hand of God; *Lev.* xvii. 10. and xx. 5, 6. But in some lesser crimes perhaps it may signify no more than to be excommunicated or shut out of the congregation of Israel, and the privileges thereof; as, for eating leavened bread at the time of the passover, *Exodus* xii. 15. or for a man's going unto the holy things with his uncleanness upon him; *Lev.* xxii. 3. where it is expressed, that that soul shall be cut off from the presence of God. But this question hath some difficulties in it, and learned men differ about the sense of these words, being cut off.

22 *Q.* If the Jews were permitted to give forty stripes, how came Paul five times to receive but forty stripes save one, from the Jews who so much hated him; 2 *Cor.* xi. 24?

A. Because they pretended to be very scrupulous in observing the law exactly, and therefore they never inflicted more than thirty-nine stripes, lest they should happen to mistake in the tale while they were inflicting forty, and thus transgress the law.

23 *Q.* What were their most common ways of putting criminals to death?

A. By hanging them on a tree, or by stoning them with stones; *Num.* xxv. 4. *Deut.* xxi. 23. *Deut.* xiii. 9, 10. *Num.* xv. 35.

24 *Q.* How many witnesses were necessary to condemn a criminal to death?

A. At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death, but not at the mouth of one witness; *Deut.* xvii. 6, 7.

25 *Q.* What was the design of God in giving them so many peculiar laws about their civil or political affairs?

A. 1. To let them know that God was their king as well as their God, and to keep

them distinct and separate from the rest of the nations as his own people and kingdom. 2. Many of these laws were in themselves excellently suited to the advantage of that people, dwelling in that country and under those circumstances. 3. Some of these laws had a moral or spiritual meaning in them, which might partly be known at that time, and which was further discovered afterwards.

26 *Q.* What instances can you give of moral lessons taught by these political laws?

A. Thou shalt not take the dam with the young, *Deut.* xxii. 6, 7. is to teach men mildness and compassion. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn, *Deut.* xxv. 4. is to shew that ministers who provide us spiritual food, ought to be maintained themselves; 1 *Cor.* ix. 9, 10. for so the apostle Paul has explained it.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE SINS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE JEWS IN THE WILDERNESS.

1 QUESTION.

AFTER all this account of the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws, can you tell me whether the people of Israel obeyed them or no?

A. No; they often broke the laws of God, and sinned against him, and were often punished; *Isaiah* lxiii. 10. *Psalm* lxxviii. 32—34.

2 *Q.* What were their most remarkable sins against God in the wilderness?

A. Besides their murmurings at some difficulties in the beginning of their journey, their first remarkable and notorious crime was their making a golden calf, and worshipping it at the foot of mount Sinai; *Exodus* xxxii. 4, 8.

3 *Q.* What temptation, or what pretence could they have for such a crime?

A. Moses was gone up into mount Sinai, and tarried there so many days longer than they expected, that they wanted some visible token of God's presence among them; and so they constrained Aaron to make this golden image to be a representation of the presence of God, but without God's appointment; *Exodus* xxxii. 1.

Note, It is scarcely to be supposed that this was the mere image of a common calf, or that the Jews could fall down and worship such an image: Or that they could suppose an ox or calf, which was the idol of their enemies the Egyptians, was a proper emblem of the God of Israel, their deliverer from Egypt. Probably therefore it was the image of a cherub, partly in the form of a winged ox: And since God was represented immediately afterwards by Moses as dwelling among the cherubims on the mercy-seat, this might be a common opinion or notion beforehand among the people, even of that age:* And it might be made as a visible representation of the presence of God, for they proclaimed a feast to Jehovah, *verse* 5. in the same manner as Jeroboam, long afterward, made perhaps the same sort of images for the same purpose, which are called calves.

* There were some things relating to the worship of God which that people had some general notion of before Moses went up into the mount to learn all the particulars from God; as for instance, they had altars and sacrifices, and sprinkling of blood; *Exodus* xxiv. 4, 6, 8. They had priests; *Exodus* xix. 22, 24. and a tabernacle or moveable chapel; *Exodus* xxxiii. 6, 7. And they might know that God dwelt among angels or some glorious winged beings as his attendants; and these cherubs might be sometimes figured as flying men with calves feet, or as flying oxen, as part of the equipage or attendants of God.

But both this and that being done without God's appointment, it was all idolatry, and in a way of utmost contempt, it was called worshipping a calf, and was accordingly punished as highly criminal. See Chapter V. Question 37.

4 *Q.* How did God punish them for the golden calf?

A. The children of Levi were commanded to slay their brethren, and they slew three thousand of the children of Israel; *Exodus* xxxii. 27, 28.

5 *Q.* What was another of their remarkable sins?

A. In the next stage, after Sinai, they loathed the manna which God sent them, and murmured for want of flesh; *Num.* xi. 4.

6 *Q.* How was the murmuring punished?

A. God gave them the flesh of quails in abundance, and sent the plague with it; *Num.* xi. 31, 33.

7 *Q.* What was the third of their remarkable sins?

A. Being discouraged by the spies who searched out the land of Canaan, and brought an ill report of that promised land, they were for making a captain to return to Egypt; *Num.* xiii. 32. and xiv. 3, 4, 36.

8 *Q.* How was this rebellion chastised?

A. Ten of the spies died immediately of a plague, and all the people were condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness, till all those who were above twenty years old should die by degrees in their travels; *Num.* xiv. 29—37.

9 *Q.* Who of the spies were saved?

A. None but Caleb and Joshua, who followed the Lord fully, and gave a good account of the land of promise; *Num.* xiv. 6, 23, 24, 37, 38. and xxvi. 65.

10 *Q.* What was their fourth remarkable sin?

A. When Korah, Dathan and Abiram stirred up a rebellion against Moses and Aaron; *Num.* xvi. 1—11.

11 *Q.* What was the occasion of this rebellion of Korah, and his companions?

A. They pretended that all Israel were holy, and that Aaron and his family had no more right to the priesthood than they; and that Moses took too much upon him to determine every thing among them; *Num.* xvi. 3, 10.

12 *Q.* How were Korah, Dathan and Abiram punished?

A. They and their families were swallowed up by an earthquake,* and their two hundred and fifty companions were burned by a fire which came out from God; *verses* 31, 35. and when the congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron for the death of these sinners, God smote above fourteen thousand of them, and they died of the plague; *verses* 41—50.

31 *Q.* What miracle did God work to shew that he had chosen Aaron's family to the priesthood?

A. He bid the heads of the people choose twelve rods for the twelve tribes of Israel, and write Aaron's name upon Levi's rod, and lay them up in the tabernacle till the morrow: At which time they took each man his rod, and Aaron's rod blossomed and yielded almonds; *Num.* xvii. 2—6—10.

14 *Q.* What was done with this rod of Aaron?

* Yet in *Num.* xxvi. 11. the sons of Korah are excepted.

A. It was laid up in the ark to be a lasting testimony against these rebels; *verse* 10. and to confirm Aaron's right to the priesthood.

15 *Q.* What was the fifth remarkable sin of the people?

A. They murmured because of the length of the way, and for want of better food than manna; *Num.* xxi. 4, 5.

16 *Q.* How was this new murmuring punished?

A. God sent fiery serpents among them, which destroyed many of them; *Num.* xxi. 6.

17 *Q.* How were the people healed which were bitten by the serpents?

A. By looking up to a serpent of brass, which Moses put upon a high pole at God's command; *Num.* xxi. 8, 9.

18 *Q.* What was a sixth remarkable sin of Israel?

A. Whoredom and idolatry; for they loved the Midianitish women, and worshipped their gods; *Num.* xxv. 1, 2.

19 *Q.* How was this whoredom and idolatry punished?

A. By the command of God and Moses, to kill the offenders, and by a plague which slew twenty-four thousand; *Num.* xxv. 4, 5, 9.

20 *Q.* Who tempted them to this idolatry?

A. Balaam the wicked prophet and soothsayer; *Num.* xxxi. 16.

21 *Q.* Why did he tempt them to it?

A. Because God hindered him from cursing Israel, when Balak the king of Moab had hired him to do it; *Num.* xxii. 5—12.

22 *Q.* How did God hinder him?

A. Three ways. 1. By forbidding him to go at first, though afterwards he permitted him. 2. By making his own ass speak to him, to stop him when he was going. 3. By inspiring him with prophecies, and compelling him to bless Israel three or four times instead of cursing them. See *Num.* xxii. 12, 30, 31. and xxiii. 7—10, 18—24.

23 *Q.* What became of Balaam at last?

A. He was slain among the Midianites, by the men of Israel, under the conduct of Moses, before they came to the river of Jordan; *Num.* xxxi. 1—8.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE JEWS ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN, AND THEIR GOVERNMENT BY JUDGES.

SECTION I.

OF THE ISRAELITES POSSESSION OF CANAAN.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT became of the people of Israel after all their wanderings in the wilderness?

Answer. Though their sins and punishments were many and great, yet they were not destroyed; but God brought them at last into Canaan, the land which he promised to their fathers; *Joshua* i. 11.

2 *Q.* Did Moses lead them into that land?

A. No; he was only permitted to see it from Mount Pisgah, and there he died, and God buried him; *Deut.* xxxiv. 1—8.

3 *Q.* Did Aaron go with them into Canaan?

A. Aaron died before Moses, and Eleazar his son was made high-priest in his room; *Num.* xx. 24—28.

4 *Q.* Why were not Moses the lawgiver, nor Aaron the high-priest, suffered to bring the people into the land of promise?

A. Because they had both sinned and offended God in the wilderness, and God would shew his displeasure against sin; *Deut.* xxxii. 48—51.

5 *Q.* What other lesson might God design to teach us by this conduct of providence?

A. Perhaps God might teach us hereby that neither the laws of Moses, nor the priesthood of Aaron, were sufficient to bring us into the possession of the heavenly country, of which Canaan was a figure.

6 *Q.* Who was appointed to lead the people of Israel into the promised land?

A. Joshua, whose name is the same with Jesus, and who came to be the governor and captain of Israel after Moses died; *Joshua* iii. 13—15.

7 *Q.* How did they get over the river Jordan?

A. As soon as the priests who bore the ark dipped their feet in the brink of the river, the waters which were above rose up in a heap, and the channel was left dry while all the people passed over; *Joshua* iii. 14, 15.

8 *Q.* What memorial did they leave of their passing over Jordan on foot?

A. By God's appointment they took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, where the priests stood with the ark while the tribes passed over, and set them up as a monument in the place wherein they lodged the first night; *Joshua* iv. 3—9, 23.

9 *Q.* How were they commanded to deal with the Canaanites when they took their land?

A. They were required to destroy them utterly, lest if they should live they might teach Israel their idolatries and their wicked customs; *Deut.* vii. 16—26.

10 *Q.* But what right had the Jews to destroy them, and take their country?

A. The Canaanites were abominable sinners, and God, by particular inspiration, made the Jews the executioners of his wrath against them, just as he might have used a plague, or the beasts of the earth to have destroyed them; and then, as the Sovereign Lord of all, he gave their forfeited country and possessions to whom he pleased; *Lev.* xviii. 24, 25. *Psalm* cxxxvi. 17—22.

Here let it be observed, that this awful instance of one nation's destroying another, and seizing their lands and possessions, was authorised by God himself, the righteous Judge of the world, in and by a long train of most conspicuous and public miracles and prophecies: So that the Israelites could not be deceived in their divine commission for this bloody work; nor is it liable to be made a precedent or a pretence for any other nation or person to treat their neighbours at this rate, be they ever so wicked, unless they can shew such astonishing and undoubted attestations of a plain commission from God, the righteous governor of the world, and the Sovereign Lord of all.

11 *Q.* What was the first city they took in Canaan?

A. Jericho, whose walls fell down, when by God's appointment they sounded the trumpets made of rams horns; *Joshua* vi. 5, 20.

12 *Q.* What did they do when they took the city?

A. By God's command they devoted it as the first-fruits, to be a sacrifice to the Lord, and therefore they burned all the goods in it, together with the city, as well as they destroyed all the inhabitants, except Rahab the harlot, and her kindred; *Joshua* vi. 24, 25.

13 *Q.* Why was Rahab spared?

A. Because she believed that God would give Israel the land of Canaan, and she hid and saved the spies whom Joshua sent; *Joshua* ii. 9—14. and vi. 25, 26. *Heb.* xi. 31.

14 *Q.* How did the army of Israel succeed against the men of Ai?

A. God suffered Israel to be put to flight before the men of Ai, because Achan an Israelite had stolen and hid some of the spoil of the city Jericho, which was accursed, and devoted to the fire; *Joshua* vii. 5—9.

15 *Q.* How was the anger of God appeased for this crime?

A. They mourned humbly before God, they sought out the person who had stolen this accursed thing, and stoned him and his family to death; *verses* 6, 13, 14, 24.

16 *Q.* How did they take the city of Ai at last?

A. By counterfeiting a flight, as on the former day; and when the men of Ai were drawn out of the city, the Israelites who lay in ambush entered and burned it; *Joshua* viii. 13—29.

17 *Q.* How did the Gibeonites deceive the people of Israel, and save themselves from death?

A. They sent ambassadors, with old sacks upon their asses, and old garments and mouldy bread, to prove that they came from a far country; and the men of Israel rashly made peace with them, and swore to it; *Joshua* ix. 4—15.

18 *Q.* What did Joshua do when he found that they dwelt in the midst of Canaan?

A. He let them live because the elders had sworn to them, but he made them hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord; *verse* 27.

19 *Q.* How did Israel conquer the king of Jerusalem, with his four allies?

A. God helped Israel by casting great hailstones from heaven upon their enemies; *Joshua* x. 10, 11.

20 *Q.* What remarkable thing did Joshua do that day?

A. He bid the sun and moon stand still, to lengthen out the day for his victory, and they obeyed him; *Joshua* x. 12—14.

21 *Q.* What did Joshua do with the five kings when he took them?

A. He called the captains of Israel to set their feet on their necks, and then he slew them, and hanged them up on five trees before the Lord; *Joshua* x. 24, 26.

22 *Q.* Did Joshua proceed to conquer the whole country?

A. The Israelites under the conduct of Joshua, went on till they had slain one-and-thirty kings, and then the people rested from war for a season; *Joshua* xi. 23. and xii. 24.

23 *Q.* Where was the tabernacle first set up after they came to Canaan?

A. In Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, at some distance from Jerusalem, and there it tarried above three hundred years, even till the days of Samuel; *Joshua* xviii. 1. 1 *Sam.* i. 3.

24 *Q.* How came it to be set up there?

A. By the appointment of God; for it is said, "He set his name first in Shiloh;" *Jer.* vii. 12. See *Deut.* xii. 5—16.

25 *Q.* How was the land of Canaan divided among the people?

A. Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, had their inheritance given them by Moses on the other side Jordan, and Joshua cast lots for the rest of the tribes before the Lord in Shiloh; *Num.* xxxii. *Joshua* xiii. 7, 8. and xviii. 10.

26 *Q.* Did not the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half Manasseh, go to help their brethren in destroying the Canaanites?

A. Yes; by the appointment of Moses they went over Jordan to assist their brethren, till they were settled in the land; *Num.* xxxii. 16—33. and *Joshua* i. 12—18.

27 *Q.* What memorial did these two tribes and a half leave in the land of Canaan, that they belonged to the nation of Israel?

A. They built a great altar upon the borders of Jordan, not for sacrifice, but merely as a memorial of their interest in the God of Israel, in the tabernacle, and in the worship thereof; *Joshua* xxii.

28 *Q.* Where was the tribe of Levi disposed of?

A. Being devoted to the services of the tabernacle and religion, they were not fixed in one spot of ground, but had a share in the inheritance of every tribe, that they might teach every city the laws of God, and their duty; *Joshua* xxi. 3.

29 *Q.* What did Joshua do just before his death?

A. He summoned the people together, and made a most solemn covenant with them, that they should serve the Lord; *Joshua* xxiii. and xxiv. 1—28.

30 *Q.* Did the Israelites go on to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan after the death of Joshua?

A. Yes; by the appointment of God, the tribe of Judah went up against Bezek; *Judges* i. 1—4.

31 *Q.* What did the Israelites do to Adonibezek, or the king of Bezek, when they took him?

A. They cut off his thumbs and great toes; *Judges* i. 6.

32 *Q.* What remark did he make upon it?

A. He confessed the justice of God in this punishment, for he had cut off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten kings, and made them gather meat under his table; *verse* 7.

33 *Q.* Did the Israelites drive all the Canaanites out of the land?

A. No; for there were some left for several hundred years after Joshua's death: The Jebusites and the Philistines continued till the days of David; 2 *Sam.* v. 6, 17.

34 *Q.* Why did not God assist Israel to drive them all out?

A. Because Israel did not obey the commands of God, and some of the Canaanites were left to prove Israel, whether they would obey the Lord, and to be as thorns in their sides, to punish them for their sins; *Joshua* xxiii. 12, 13. *Judges* ii. 3, 21. and iii. 1—4.

35 *Q.* What were the most common sins that Israel was guilty of after their settlement in Canaan?

A. They fell to idolatry, or worshipping the gods of the nations round about them after Joshua was dead, and the elders of the people of that age that outlived Joshua; *Judges* ii. 6, 7, 10—15.

SECTION II.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL BY JUDGES.

36 *Q.* WHO governed the people of Israel after Joshua's death?

A. God was always the king and ruler of Israel, and under him the several tribes probably chose their own judges, magistrates, and officers, according to the appointment of Moses; *Exod.* xviii. *Deut.* i. 13. *Joshua* xxiv. 1.

Note, These officers or judges which were set over the people by Moses, at the advice of Jethro, were at first chosen by the people in their several tribes, just after they came out of Egypt; *Exod.* xviii. Moses says to the people, "take ye wise men," &c. *Deut.* i. 13.

The seventy or seventy-two elders were the gravest and most venerable of these officers, six out of every tribe; for God says to Moses, "Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest, to be officers over them;" *Num.* xi. 16. These were to meet together, and consult upon extraordinary occasions, as when a sort of sedition was raised by the murmurings of the people; *Num.* xi. or in such like cases of danger.

The high-priest was the chief counsellor, and sometimes a judge, for the oracle of God was with him, and he was supposed to be chiefly skilled in the law, especially if he were an elderly man.

The common priests and levites were also assistants to the judges by way of counsel, and in deciding controversies in every tribe; *Deut.* xvii. 9—12. But still the executive power was vested in the judges of each tribe, and God himself was their king, and the centre of union and government.

But when, through their idolatry and wickedness, God forsook the people, and officers and judges neglected their duty, the people sustained the miseries and confusions of an anarchy, as it is several times expressed in the book of Judges, "There was no king in Israel, and every one did what was right in his own eyes." And by their disunion and want of government, they were weakened, and became an easy prey to their enemies round about them: But at particular seasons, God raised them up extraordinary judges to recover them from slavery, and to restore government among them: And these had a dominion over many, or all the tribes, being raised up eminently by God himself.

That this was the original and appointed method of the government of Israel, as I have described it, we may learn partly from *Deut.* i. 13. where the officers are chosen, and *Deut.* xvii. 8—12. and xix. 16—18. where Moses appoints the business of the priests and the judges; and partly from 2 *Chron.* xvii. 7—9. and xix 5—11. where Hezekiah makes a reformation throughout the land, and appoints the judges to be executors of justice, the priests and levites to be the teachers to the people, and counsellors to the judges, and the high-priest to be the chief counsellor: And sometimes he was a judge also, as was before intimated.

37 *Q.* Was not the high-priest their ruler under God?

A. The high-priest seems to be appointed by God and Moses to be the chief counsellor in declaring the laws and statutes of God, as the other priests were also counsellors: But

the executive power of government was rather vested in those who were called judges, whether they were ordinary or extraordinary; *Deut.* xvii. 9—22.

38 *Q.* Did these ordinary officers do justice, and maintain good order in the land after the days of Joshua?

A. We have very little account of them; but it is certain they did not fulfil their duty, because there was sometimes great wickedness among the people without restraint; much idolatry and mischief, both public and private, and that for want of government; *Judges* xvii. 6. and xxi. 25.

39 *Q.* Why did God, the king of Israel, leave his people under these inconveniences?

A. As they had forsaken God and his laws, so God seemed sometimes to have forsaken the care of them, and given them up to the confusions and miseries which arise from want of government for a season; and also suffered their enemies on every side to make inroads upon them, and bring them into slavery; *Judges* ii. 11—15.

40 *Q.* But did not the great God interpose for their deliverance?

A. Sometimes, in the course of his providence, and by special inspiration, he raised up extraordinary judges to rescue them from the hand of their enemies, and to restore government among them; *Judges* ii. 16—19.

41 *Q.* Who were some of the most remarkable of these extraordinary judges?

A. Ehud and Shamgar, Deborah and Gideon, Jephthah and Samson, and Samuel.

42 *Q.* Who was Ehud?

A. A man of Benjamin, who delivered Israel from the oppression of Eglon king of Moab; *Judges* iii. 12, 15.

43 *Q.* How did he deliver them?

A. By bringing a present to Eglon, and then stabbing him with a dagger; *Judges* iii. 16, 17.

44 *Q.* What did Shamgar do toward their deliverance?

A. He rescued Israel from the oppression of the Philistines, and slew six hundred of them with an ox's goad; *Judges* iii. 31.

45 *Q.* Who was Deborah?

A. She was a woman, a prophetess, who delivered Israel from the tyranny of Jabin king of Canaan, who had nine hundred chariots of iron; *Judges* iv. 2—4.

46 *Q.* How did she deliver Israel from his hand?

A. She sent forth Barak to battle against him, who routed his army, which was commanded by Sisera his general; *Judges* iv. 5.

47 *Q.* How was Sisera slain?

A. By the hand of Jael, a woman, who when he came to rest himself in her tent, drove a nail into his temples; *Judges* iv. 18—22.

48 *Q.* Who was Gideon?

A. The son of Joash; he was called by an angel, or by God himself, to destroy the worship of Baal, and to deliver Israel from the hands of the Midianites; *Judges* vi. 11—14.

Note, Gideon had sufficient evidence that this was a message from God himself, for the angel talked with him; and when Gideon had fetched some flesh and cakes to entertain him, the angel bid him lay them upon a rock, and pour out the broth upon them, then with one end of his rod the angel touched them, and fire arose and consumed them.

49 *Q.* How did he begin his work?

A. He first threw down the altar of Baal the idol by night, and cut down the idolatrous grove, and then offered a sacrifice to the Lord, according to the order he had received from God; *Judges* vi. 25—28.

50 *Q.* What further sign did God give him of success?

A. At his request God made a fleece of wool wet, when the ground all round it was dry; and again, he made a fleece of wool dry, when the ground was wet; *Judges* vi. 36—40.

51 *Q.* How many men did God appoint for Gideon's army?

A. Out of thirty-two thousand he appointed but three hundred men; *Judges* vii. 3, 6, 7.

52 *Q.* How did three hundred men conquer Midian?

A. Each of them by Gideon's order took a trumpet, and a pitcher with a lamp in it, and coming at midnight on the camp of the Midianites, they broke their pitchers, and frighted them with a sudden blaze of lamps, the sound of the trumpets, and loud shouting; *Judges* vii. 20—23.

53. *Q.* Did Gideon reign over Israel after this great victory?

A. No, he refused, for he said God was their king; *Judges* viii. 23.

54 *Q.* Did Gideon's sons govern Israel afterwards?

A. None of Gideon's threescore and ten sons set up themselves, but Abimelech, the son of his concubine, made himself king; *Judges* ix. 1, 2, 6.

55 *Q.* How did Abimelech advance himself to the kingdom?

A. He slew all his threescore and ten brothers, except the youngest, who escaped; *Judges* ix. 5.

56 *Q.* How was Abimelech slain?

A. When he was besieging a city, a woman cast a piece of mill-stone upon his head; *Judges* ix. 51—53.

57 *Q.* Who was Jephthah?

A. A mighty man of valour, who delivered Israel from the power of the Ammonites; *Judges* xi. 1, 32, 33.

58 *Q.* What was remarkable concerning him?

A. He made a rash vow to sacrifice to God the first thing that came to meet him after his victory, and that happened to be his daughter, and only child; *Judges* xi. 30, 31, 34.

Note, It is a matter of doubt and controversy among the learned, whether Jephthah, being a soldier in those days of ignorance, did not really offer his daughter for a sacrifice, according to his vow, as the scripture seems to express it; or whether he only restrained her from marriage and bearing children, which in those days was accounted like a sacrifice, and as a sentence of death passed on them.

59 *Q.* Who was Samson?

A. The son of Manoah, and he delivered Israel from the hands of the Philistines; *Judges* xiii. and xiv. and xv. and xvi.

60 *Q.* What was his character?

A. He was the strongest of men, but he does not seem to have been the wisest or the best.

61 *Q.* Wherein did his strength lie?

A. He was a nazarite, devoted to God from his birth, and so was bound to let his hair grow, and then God was with him: But when his hair was cut, God left him; *Judges* xiii. 7. and xvi. 17.

62 *Q.* What instances did he give of his great strength?

A. He tore a lion asunder, he broke all the cords with which he was bound, he slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; and when he fell in love with a harlot in Gaza, and the Philistines beset the city gates, he carried away the gates and gate-posts of the city with him, when he made his way out and escaped; *Judges* xiv. 5, 6. and xv. 13, 14. and xvi. 3, 11, 13.

63 *Q.* What befell him afterwards?

A. He fell in love with Delilah, another of the Philistine women, who cut off his hair, and then she betrayed him to the Philistines, who put out his eyes, and made him grind in a mill; *Judges* xvi. 4—21.

64 *Q.* What was Samson's end?

A. Thousands of the Philistines were gathered together to make sport with Samson; and in order to revenge himself of the Philistines, and to destroy the enemies of Israel, he pulled the house down upon their heads and his own; *Judges* xvi. 30.

65 *Q.* Who judged Israel after Samson?

A. Eli the high-priest is said to judge Israel forty years; but he is not supposed to be one of the extraordinary judges who delivered them, but rather, that he was made an ordinary magistrate, perhaps over some part of the land; 1 *Sam.* iv. 18.

66 *Q.* Who was the last of these extraordinary judges?

A. Samuel the prophet, the son of Hannah, a pious woman who had no child before, and requested of God to give her one; 1 *Sam.* i. 20.

67 *Q.* What is written in honour of Hannah?

A. When she was greatly provoked and grieved in spirit, she prayed to God at the tabernacle, and she went away cheerful; 1 *Sam.* i. 15—18.

68 *Q.* Where was Samuel brought up?

A. As he was requested of the Lord so he was given to the Lord, and was brought up at the tabernacle in Shiloh under the care of Eli the high-priest; 1 *Sam.* i. 22, 28.

69 *Q.* What was Samuel's office?

A. He waited on the service of the tabernacle as a levite, being the first-born, and being given to God; 1 *Sam.* ii. 18.

70 *Q.* Was he not also a prophet?

A. Yes, God called him three times in one night when he was a child, and made a prophet of him, and told him what calamities should befall the house of Eli the high-priest; 1 *Sam.* iii. 4—14.

71 *Q.* What was the great crime of Eli?

A. Though he loved and honoured God himself, yet he did not restrain his sons from wickedness; 1 *Sam.* iii. 13.

72 *Q.* In what manner did God shew his displeasure against the house of Eli?

A. His two sons were slain by the Philistines in battle, and the high-priesthood went into another branch of Aaron's family; 1 *Sam.* ii. 27—36. 1 *Kings* ii. 27.

73 *Q.* What became of Eli himself?

A. When he heard that the ark of God was taken by the Philistines he fainted for grief, and falling down backward he brake his neck; 1 *Sam.* iv. 17, 18.

74 *Q.* What did the Philistines do with the ark of God?

A. They brought it into the house of their idol Dagon, and the idol fell down and broke off his head and his hands upon the threshold; 1 *Sam.* v. 2—5.

75 *Q.* What punishments did the Philistines suffer for keeping the ark?

A. In several cities where they placed it, God destroyed many of the inhabitants, and smote the rest with sore diseases; 1 *Sam.* v. 6—12.

76 *Q.* What became of the ark then?

A. The Philistines put it into a new cart drawn by two milch-kine, whose calves were shut up at home, and yet they carried it directly into the land of Israel to Bethshemesh; 1 *Sam.* vi. 12.

77 *Q.* What did the men of Bethshemesh do?

A. They looked into the ark, which was utterly forbidden, and God smote many of them with a great slaughter, and they sent the ark away to Kirjathjerim; 1 *Sam.* vi. 19—21.

78 *Q.* How did Samuel deliver Israel from the Philistines when they made new war upon them?

A. He offered a burnt-offering, and prayed to the Lord, and God fought against the Philistines with thunder from heaven, and scattered and destroyed them; 1 *Sam.* vii. 9, 10, 13.

79 *Q.* How did Samuel govern the people?

A. He travelled through the land every year, he judged Israel with great honour and justice for many years, but in his old age he made his sons judges, and they oppressed and abused the people; 1 *Sam.* vi. 15—17. and xii. 1—5. and viii. 1—4.

80 *Q.* What was the request of the people on this occasion?

A. That they might have a king like the rest of the nations; 1 *Sam.* viii. 5.

81 *Q.* What did Samuel do in this case?

A. He would have advised them against it, because God was their king, but they still persisted in desiring a man for a king; 1 *Sam.* viii. 6, 7, 19, 20.

82 *Q.* Did Samuel gratify them in this desire?

A. Being admonished of God, he complied with their desire, and appointed a king over them; 1 *Sam.* viii. 22.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL UNDER THEIR KINGS, AND FIRST OF SAUL AND DAVID.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was the first king of Israel?

Answer. Saul, a very tall young man, the son of Kish a Benjamite; 1 *Sam.* ix. 1, 2.

2 *Q.* How did Samuel first meet with him?

A. Saul was sent by his father to seek some asses that he had lost, and asking Samuel about them, Samuel took him aside privately and anointed him king of Israel; 1 *Sam.* ix. 15—27. and x. 1—8.

3 *Q.* But how was he made king publicly?

A. God chose and determined Saul to be king by casting lots among the tribes and families of Israel; 1 *Sam.* x. 19—25.

4 *Q.* How did Saul behave himself in his kingdom?

A. He governed well at first for a little time, but afterward he disobeyed the word of God in several instances, and God rejected him; 1 *Sam.* xiii. 13. and xv. 23.

5 *Q.* Whom did God choose in his room?

A. David of the tribe of Judah, who is called the man after God's own heart? 1 *Sam.* xvi. 1. 1 *Sam.* xiii. 14. *Acts* xiii. 22.

6 *Q.* Who were the forefathers of David?

A. He was the youngest son of Jesse, who was the son of Obed, who was the son of Boaz by Ruth his wife; *Ruth* iv. 17—22.

7 *Q.* What was this Ruth?

A. She was a woman of Moab, and she married Mahlon a Jew, the son of Naomi, when they came to sojourn in Moab, because of a famine in Israel; *Ruth* i. 1—4.

8 *Q.* Did Ruth leave the country of Moab?

A. Yes, after her husband died in the land of Moab, she followed her mother-in-law Naomi into the land of Israel, and took the God of Israel for her God; *Ruth* i. 16, 17.

9 *Q.* What kind providence attended her in the land of Israel?

A. Boaz, a rich man, who was near of kin to her former husband, married her, and so she became the great grandmother of David; *Ruth* iv. 16, 17.

10 *Q.* What was David's employment?

A. Being the youngest son of a large family, he was bred up to keep his father's sheep; 1 *Sam.* xvi. 11.

11 *Q.* What considerable actions did he do while he was a shepherd?

A. He killed a lion and a bear who came to rob his father's flock; 1 *Sam.* xvii. 34.

12 *Q.* How did God anoint him to be king?

A. He sent Samuel secretly to anoint him with oil at Bethlehem in the midst of his brethren; 1 *Sam.* xvi. 13.

13 *Q.* How did David make his first appearance at court?

A. David understood music, and when the evil spirit of melancholy came upon Saul, hearing of David's skill in music he sent for him to play on the harp to refresh him; 1 *Sam.* xvi. 16—23.

14 *Q.* What remarkable action made him more publicly known?

A. When Goliath the giant challenged the men of Israel, David undertook the combat and slew him with a sling and a stone; 1 *Sam.* xvii. 49—51.

15 *Q.* How did Saul employ him afterward?

A. He sent him out against the Philistines, and he slew many thousands of them; 1 *Sam.* xix. 8.

16 *Q.* How came Saul then to bear him an ill-will?

A. From mere envy, because the women of Israel sung to their instruments of music, "Saul had slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands;" 1 *Sam.* xviii. 5, 6, 7.

17 *Q.* Wherein did Saul discover his ill-will to him?

A. He threw a javelin at him, and often attempted to kill him; 1 *Sam.* xviii. 21.

18 *Q.* Did not Saul marry his second daughter Michal to him?

A. Yes, but he required of him the slaughter of a hundred Philistines instead of his dowry, hoping that David himself would be slain in the attempt; 1 *Sam.* xviii. 17—30.

19 *Q.* Who then were the friends of David when the king was his enemy?

A. All the people of Israel loved him, and so did Jonathan the son of Saul, who screened him often from his father's malice; 1 *Sam.* xviii. 5. and xix. 2.

20 *Q.* But how could David escape so long when Saul ordered his servants to kill him?

A. He fled from place to place in the land of Israel, and was hunted like a partridge on the mountains, till at last he was forced to hide himself twice among the Philistines; 1 *Sam.* xxi. 10. and xxvi. 20. and xxvii. 1.

21 *Q.* What did he do there?

A. When he was at Gath the first time he feigned himself mad, lest Achish the king of Gath should kill him; 1 *Sam.* xxi. 12, 13.

22 *Q.* How did David save his father's house from Saul's rage?

A. He desired the king of Moab to let his father and his mother dwell there, but he himself went into the land of Judah; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 1—5.

23 *Q.* How did Saul further manifest his rage against David?

A. He slew fourscore and five persons of the priests of the Lord, because he supposed they had concealed David, and did not tell the king where he was; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 17, 18.

24 *Q.* Had David any army under his command at this time?

A. Yes, he had gathered together about four hundred men, which grew in a little time to six hundred; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 2. and xxiii. 13.

25 *Q.* Did David fight with Saul all this time?

A. No, he avoided him, and fled from him continually, by shifting his place whensoever Saul pursued him, and at last was forced to go into the land of the Philistines again; 1 *Sam.* xxiii. and xxiv. and xxvii.

26 *Q.* Did David never attempt to kill Saul?

A. No, but he spared his life twice when he had it in his power to kill him; 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 7—11. and xxvi. 11, 12.

27 *Q.* Had this kindness of David no influence to soften the heart of Saul toward him?

A. Yes, it did for the present; but Saul's envy and malice were so rooted in his heart, that they prevailed above all the principles of kindness and gratitude; 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 16—21. and xxvi. 1—3. and xxvii. 1.

28 *Q.* What became of Saul at last?

A. The Philistines invaded Israel, and Saul was in great distress, because God gave him no directions, nor answered him by dreams, nor by the priests nor prophets; 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 4—6.

29 *Q.* What did Saul do then?

A. He enquired of a woman who had a familiar spirit, and there he was told by an apparition of something in the shape of Samuel, that he and his sons should die on the morrow; 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 8, 19.

30 *Q.* Did this come to pass?

A. Yes, the Philistines slew several of his sons and wounded him sorely in the battle, and then he fell upon his own sword, and slew himself; 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 3, 4.

31 *Q.* Where was David all this while?

A. He was fled the second time to Achish king of Gath, and he had been just then employed in destroying the Amalekites, who had plundered the city Ziklag where he dwelt, and had carried away his wives; 1 *Sam.* xxx. 16—20.

32 *Q.* Did not David offer his service to the Philistines?

A. Yes, but he always avoided fighting against the Israelites; and besides, the lords of the Philistines at this time would not suffer him to continue in their army, which was done by the kind providence of God, that David might not fight against Israel; 1 *Sam.* xxvii. 8—11. and xxix. 4. and 2 *Sam.* i. 1.

33 *Q.* What did David do upon the death of Saul?

A. He made a very fine elegy upon him and Jonathan his son, and went up to Hebron, a city of Judah, by God's direction, where the men of Judah made him their king; 2 *Sam.* ii. 1—4.

34 *Q.* Who reigned then over the rest of the tribes of Israel?

A. Ishbosheth, another of the sons of Saul; 2 *Sam.* ii. 8, 9.

35 *Q.* How came Ishbosheth to lose the kingdom?

A. He quarrelled with Abner, the general of his army, whereupon Abner joined with David: And after this two of Ishbosheth's own servants slew him in his bed; 2 *Sam.* ii. 7—10, 17, 18. and iv. 5, 7.

36 *Q.* How long did David reign in Hebron?

A. Seven years and a half; And then all Israel came to him and chose him for their king, and brought him up to Jerusalem; 2 *Sam.* v. 1—6.

37 *Q.* What was the first thing David did when he came to Jerusalem?

A. He took the strong hold of Zion from the Jebusites, who had held it to that day, and called it the city of David; 2 *Sam.* v. 6—9.

38 *Q.* Where was the ark of God all this while?

A. At Kirjathjearim, whence David now fetched it up by God's direction to Jerusalem in triumph, and placed it in Zion; 2 *Sam.* vi. 1—17. 1 *Chron.* xiii. 5, 6.

39 *Q.* What was David's pious design toward the ark of God?

A. He had a mind to build a house for the ark of God, which had hitherto dwelt in curtains; 2 *Sam.* vii. 2, 3.

40 *Q.* Did God encourage him to proceed in it?

A. No, God did not encourage him because he had shed much blood; but he promised that he should have a son, who should build him a house; 2 *Sam.* vii. 12, 13.

41 *Q.* Had David no wars after this?

A. Yes, he had many battles, and was victorious over his enemies round about him, *viz.* the Philistines and Moabites, the Syrians and Edomites, &c. 2 *Sam.* viii. 1—14.

42 *Q.* How did David govern Israel?

A. He executed judgment and justice among all the people; 2 *Sam.* viii. 15.

43 *Q.* What were the chief blemishes of David's life?

A. His adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and his pride in numbering the people of Israel.

44 *Q.* How came David to fall in love with Bathsheba?

A. David from the top of his house happened to see her washing herself, and sent for her and defiled her; 2 *Sam.* xi. 4.

45 *Q.* What aggravation attended this sin?

A. Besides the heinous crime of adultery in the sight of God, here was vile ingratitude and base carriage towards Uriah, who at that time was abroad fighting for him against the Ammonites; 2 *Sam.* xi. 6.

46 *Q.* How did he try to hide it fromUriah and from the world?

A. When he could not persuade Uriah to go to his own house, he sent an order to Joab his general, that he should set Uriah in the hottest place of the battle, and retire from him, and leave him to be slain; 2 *Sam.* xi. 15.

47 *Q.* What followed upon the death of Uriah which David had thus contrived?

A. David added Bathsheba to the rest of his wives, and she bare him a son; 2 *Sam.* viii. 27.

48 *Q.* How was David convinced of his sin?

A. By an ingenious parable of Nathan the prophet, concerning a rich man who robbed his neighbour of a ewe-lamb, though he had large flocks of his own; 2 *Sam.* xii. 1—8.

49 *Q.* How did God testify his displeasure against David for this sin?

A. He struck the child that was born with sickness and death, and threatened David, that the sword should never depart from his house, and that his own wives should be publicly abused; 2 *Sam.* xii. 9—14.

Note, David testified his deep repentance for this sin in the fifty-first Psalm, and perhaps also in some others: Yet God saw it proper to punish him severely; because he had given the enemies of God occasion to blaspheme; 2 *Sam.* xii. 14.

50 *Q.* What were some of the chief troubles that actually came on David's family on this account?

A. The troubles that he met with from three of his sons, *viz.* Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.

51 *Q.* What was the trouble he met with from Amnon?

A. Amnon defiled his sister Thamar by force, upon which Absalom slew him, and then fled out of the land for fear of justice; 2 *Sam.* xiii. 14, 28, 37.

52 *Q.* Did Absalom never return again?

A. Yes, Absalom returned after two years, when David was pacified, and by his subtile carriage he raised a rebellion against the king his father, and made himself king; 2 *Sam.* xiv. and xv.

53 *Q.* What followed upon this wicked practice of Absalom?

A. David being forced to flee from Jerusalem, Absalom entered the city, and defiled his father's concubines publicly; 2 *Sam.* xv. 14. and xvi. 21.

54 *Q.* Who was Absalom's chief counseller in this rebellion?

A. Achitophel, who when he saw that his last counsel was not followed, went home and hanged himself; 2 *Sam.* xvii. 23.

55 *Q.* What became of Absalom at last?

A. As he was riding under an oak in the day of battle, he was caught by the hair of the head, and hung between heaven and earth, where Joab, David's general, found him, and stabbed him to the heart; 2 *Sam.* xviii. 9, 14. and thus put an end to his rebellion and his life.

56 *Q.* What was the other remarkable crime of David besides his abuse and murder of Uriah.

A. The pride of his heart in numbering all the people of the tribes of Israel, that he might know how great a king he was; 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 2.

57 *Q.* How was he punished for this sin?

A. God gave him leave to choose one of these three punishments, either seven years famine, or three months of war, or three days pestilence; 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 13.

58 *Q.* Which did David choose?

A. The famine or the pestilence rather than war, for he chose rather to fall into the hands of God than of man; 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 14.

59 *Q.* Which of these two judgments did God send upon the land?

A. A pestilence that destroyed seventy thousand men in three days time; *verse* 15.

60 *Q.* How was this pestilence stopped?

A. When David saw the angel of the Lord stand between heaven and earth, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem, he and the elders of Israel fell upon their faces clothed in sackcloth; and David confessed his crime, and prayed that the anger of God might fall on himself rather than on the people; 1 *Chron.* xxi. 15, 16.

61 *Q.* How did God manifest his acceptance of him?

A. He bid Gad the prophet order David to build an altar, and offer sacrifices on that very spot of ground on the threshing-floor of Ornan, and when David prayed, fire came from heaven and consumed the sacrifices; 1 *Chron.* xxi. 21—26.

62 *Q.* What was the trouble that David met with from his son Adonijah?

A. When David was old, Adonijah set himself up for king; 1 *Kings* i. 1, 5.

63 *Q.* How came Adonijah to be so insolent?

A. His father humoured him too much all his life, and never displeased him; *verse* 6.

64 *Q.* What did David do under this trouble?

A. He proclaimed Solomon the son of Bathsheba king in his own lifetime, and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed him king of Israel; *verses* 34, 38, 39.

65 *Q.* Why was Solomon preferred when he was a younger brother?

A. Because God chose him to the kingdom, and gave David some notice of it; 1 *Chron.* xxii. 8—10. and xxviii. 5—7.

66 *Q.* What became of Adonijah?

A. He submitted to Solomon, who spared him for that time, though for a new fault he put him to death afterwards; *verses* 50, 53. and ii. 2, 24.

67 *Q.* How long did David reign in all?

A. Forty years, and then he died in his bed in peace; 1 *Kings* ii. 10, 11.

68 *Q.* What were David's remarkable characters, besides that of a musician, a warrior, and a king?

A. He was a great poet and a prophet; 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1, 2.

69 *Q.* Wherein did his skill in poesy appear?

A. Not only in his admirable elegy on Saul and Jonathan, but on several occasions he wrote the most part of the book of Psalms, which are the finest pieces of ancient poesy, and he was called, The sweet Psalmist of Israel; 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1.

70 *Q.* Wherein doth it appear that he had the gift of prophecy?

A. Because these Psalms were written by divine inspiration, for in some of them there are many things evidently foretold concerning Christ; *Luke* xxiv. 44. *Acts* ii. 29, 30.

71 *Q.* What further evidences are there of his being a prophet?

A. He had a particular revelation made to him by the Spirit of God, of the pattern of the temple which Solomon his son was to build, and of the orders of the priests and levites, and of several things relating to the worship of God, which he gave to his son Solomon; 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 11—13, 19.

72 *Q.* What did David do toward the building of this temple before his death?

A. He made a vast preparation of gold and silver and jewels, and other materials, and gave the pattern of every thing to his son Solomon, as he received it of God; 1 *Chron.* xxii. 5, 14. and xxviii. 11, 19. and xxix. 2.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE REIGN OF SOLOMON AND REHOBOAM OVER ALL ISRAEL, AND THE DIVISION OF THE NATION INTO TWO KINGDOMS.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT was the general character of Solomon?

Answer. That he was the wisest of men; 1 *Kings* iii. 12. and iv. 31.

2 *Q.* Wherein did his wisdom toward God appear?

A. In that he asked not long life, nor riches, nor honours, but understanding and knowledge to govern so great a people; 1 *Kings* iii. 7—14.

3 *Q.* What was the first instance of his wisdom in the government?

A. His deciding the quarrel between two women who contended about a child, and in giving the child to the true mother; 1 *Kings* iii. 16—28.

4 *Q.* How did he find out the true mother?

A. He commanded the child to be divided in two, that each woman might have half: Then the tenderness and love of the true mother appeared in yielding up her pretensions to it, rather than see it divided; 1 *Kings* iii. 25.

5 *Q.* What special care did Solomon take for the worship of God?

A. He built that temple for which David had made so large a preparation. It was a most glorious palace, built of cedar and fir, and olive wood, and hewn stone, with most amazing expence of gold and silver, and brass and precious stones, both for the adorning of the house itself and for the holy vessels thereof; 1 *Kings* vi. and vii. He built also two distinct courts about it, one for the people of Israel, and one for the priests, all which were called the temple; 2 *Kings* xxiii. 12. and 2 *Chron.* iv. 9.

Note, In this temple of Solomon there does not seem to be any court of the gentiles, but only the court of the priests, in which the house of God or sanctuary stood, and the court of the people to which all Israel resorted; nor can I find the gentiles forbidden by any express word of God; See 2 *Chron.* vi. 32. one was the outer court, and the other the inner court; 2 *Chron.* iv. 9. and 1 *Kings* vi. 36. Nor were the people excluded from the inner court; See 2 *Chron.* xxiii. 10.

In the second temple which was built by Zerubbabel after the captivity, we do not read of any court of the gentiles at the building of it: But in following years, when there were more frequent communications and transactions with gentiles, there was a partition made called Chel, to divide them from the Jews, and the other part of the outer court was left for the gentiles. In the temple which Herod built, and which was in our Saviour's time, there was a court made on purpose for the gentiles, and those Jews which were unclean. But this division does not sufficiently appear to be of divine appointment, though, it must be confessed, the partition-wall in *Eph.* ii. 14. seems to refer to it.

6 *Q.* In what form did he build it?

A. In imitation of the tabernacle of Moses and the court thereof, but with vast and universal improvements in grandeur and riches, and magnificence of it, by the pattern that David his father had received from God, and gave to him; 1 *Chron.* xxii. 5. and xxviii. 11, 19.

7 *Q.* On what spot of ground did he build it?

A. On mount Moriah, not very far from mount Zion in Jerusalem: It was the place where Abraham was called to offer his son Isaac, and where God appeared to David when he stopped the pestilence; 2 *Chron.* iii. 1. and *Gen.* xxii. 2. and gave him a miraculous token of his acceptance, by fire from heaven consuming his sacrifice; 1 *Chron.* xxi. 26.

Note, Though the temple was built on mount Moriah, yet the name of Zion is still preserved by the following holy writers as the place of the sanctuary; partly because David had written so much in his Psalms concerning Zion, where the ark and tabernacle stood in his days, and made the name familiar to the people: And partly because Zion was literally the city of David, and in a typical sense, the city or residence of Christ. And indeed Zion and Moriah may be accounted but two distinct heads of the same mountain; and though there was a valley between them, Solomon joined them by a bridge, that he might easily pass from his palace in Zion to the temple. Josephus makes mention of it more than once.

8 *Q.* How did Solomon dedicate this temple to God?

A. By assembling all the men of Israel, by bringing thither the ark and the holy things from Zion, by a devout prayer to God, by music and praises, by a feast of seven days, and a vast number of sacrifices; 1 *Kings* viii. and 2 *Chron.* vi. and vii.

9 *Q.* In what manner did God shew his approbation of it?

A. He filled the house with a cloud of glory to represent his taking possession of it: He sent fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifices, and he appeared in the night to Solomon, and assured him he had heard his prayer, and chosen that place for a house of sacrifice to himself; 2 *Chron.* vii. 1—3, 12.

10 *Q.* Wherein did God bless the reign of Solomon?

A. By giving him prodigious treasures and magnificent state, and spreading the fame of his greatness and wisdom over all nations; 1 *Kings* x.

11 *Q.* What peculiar honours were done to him on this account?

A. The princes round about him coveted his friendship, and gave him their assistance and many presents, and the queen of Sheba came to visit him; 1 *Kings* ix. and x.

12 *Q.* What satisfaction did she find in this visit?

A. She was astonished at the sight of his grandeur and wisdom, and confessed that the one half of it was not told her; 1 *Kings* x. 1—10.

13 *Q.* Wherein did Solomon displease God afterwards?

A. In process of time he forgot his great obligations to God, he took wives and concubines in multitudes, and that out of the idolatrous nations: And by them his heart was so far led away for other gods, that he built places of worship for them very near Jerusalem, and offered sacrifices to them; See 1 *Kings* xi. 1—9.

14 *Q.* How did God punish him for it?

A. He stirred up several enemies against him, and particularly Jeroboam his own servant; See 1 *Kings* xi. 14, 23, 26.

15 *Q.* What was Jeroboam's own pretence for disturbing the government?

A. The building of some expensive palaces for Pharaoh's daughter, who was his queen, and the raising heavy taxes for that and other buildings; 1 *Kings* ix. 24. and xi. 27. and xii. 4.

Note, Jeroboam doth not appear to charge Solomon with promoting idolatry, or with breaking the laws of God in divine worship; for he himself did so afterward when he

was king of Israel, which was a high provocation in the eyes of God both in Solomon and Jeroboam.

16 *Q.* And how far did God encourage Jeroboam in this opposition to Solomon?

A. Ahijah the prophet being sent of God, caught hold of Jeroboam's garment when he met him in the field, and rent it into twelve pieces, and gave ten of them to Jeroboam; 1 *Kings* xi. 29—39.

17 *Q.* What was the meaning of this?

A. The prophet told him, that God had given him ten of the tribes of Israel, and had left the posterity of Solomon one tribe, that is, Judah and Benjamin, which were afterward united into one under the name of Jews; 1 *Kings* xi. 31. and xii. 20, 21. and 2 *Chron.* xi. 12.

18 *Q.* Was this fulfilled in Solomon's days?

A. No; for it pleased God to withhold these calamities from the house of Solomon till the days of his son; *verse* 23.

19 *Q.* Did Solomon ever repent of his sins that provoked the anger of God against him?

A. It is generally supposed that the book of Ecclesiastes is a sort of proof that Solomon repented, because he there describes the vanity of every labour and every enjoyment under the sun, and sums up all in the fear of God, and keeping his commandments, as the whole duty, and chief interest of man; *Eccles.* i. and ii. and xii. 13, 14.

20 *Q.* How long did king Solomon reign?

A. Forty years; and though he had such a shameful number of wives and concubines, yet he left but one son behind him, whose name was Rehoboam, to succeed him in the kingdom of Israel; 1 *Kings* xi. 3, 43.

21 *Q.* What was the character of Rehoboam?

A. Though Solomon had written so many excellent lessons of morality and piety for his son in the book of Proverbs, and given him so many warnings, yet he followed evil courses; and Solomon himself seems to intimate it in the book of Ecclesiastes; *chap.* ii. 19. "Who knoweth whether his son will be a wise man or a fool?"

22 *Q.* What further occasion did Rehoboam give for the revolt of the tribes of Israel from him?

A. Upon the death of his father, and his accession to the throne, he despised the counsel of old men, and hearkened to the advice of rash young men, he threatened the nation of Israel to make their yoke heavier than his father had done; that is, to lay heavier taxes upon them; 1 *Kings* xii. 8—15.

23 *Q.* What followed upon this threatening of king Rehoboam?

A. All the tribes of Israel, except Judah and Benjamin, made Jeroboam their king; and thus the nation was divided into two kingdoms, which were afterwards called the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel; 1 *Kings* xii. 15, 20. 2 *Chron.* xi. 11. 12.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.

1 QUESTION.

HOW many kings reigned over Israel after they were separated from Judah?

Answer. These nineteen, and not one of them was good; Jeroboam the first, Nadab, Baashah, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam the second, Zachariah, Shallum, Manahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea.

2 *Q.* Who were the most remarkable among these kings of Israel?

A. Jeroboam the first, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehu, Joash, Pekah and Hoshea.

3 *Q.* What was the chief character and crime of Jeroboam?

A. Instead of worshipping God, who dwelt between the cherubs in the temple at Jerusalem, he made two golden images which are called calves, and set them up in two distant parts of the land of Israel, *viz.* Dan and Bethel, and taught the people to worship before them; 1 *Kings* xii. 28—30.

4 *Q.* What was the worship which he appointed?

A. Something like the worship which God appointed at Jerusalem, with an altar, and priests, and sacrifices, and incense; *verse* 32.

5 *Q.* Wherein did it differ from the worship at Jerusalem?

A. Besides the forsaking of the temple, and the place which God appointed, he also made priests of the lowest of the people, instead of the sons of Levi, and ordained feasts at a different time from that which God had appointed, and set up the images of calves to represent the presence of God; *verses* 23, 32. and 2 *Chron.* xi. 6. and xii. 13. and xiii. 8, 9.

Note, Here it is not to be supposed that Jeroboam forsook the God of Israel, and taught the people to worship mere calves; but only that he devised of his own heart other times and places, and other forms and circumstances of worship to be paid to the God of Israel; and that by images or idols, which were probably the figures of the cherubs on the mercy-seat where God dwelt: But the scripture in contempt calls them calves. See Chapter V. Question 37. and Chapter VII. Question 3. And the worship is called idolatry, and the worship of other gods. The prophet Hosea, who lived in the days of Jeroboam the second, the son of Joash, perpetually rebukes this sin of idolatry, and inveighs against these idols the calves; *Hosea* i. 1. and viii. 4, 5. and x. 5 and xiii. 2.

6 *Q.* For what end did Jeroboam do this?

A. He feared if the people went up frequently to sacrifice at Jerusalem, they would be tempted to return again to Rehoboam king of Judah; *verses* 26—28.

7 *Q.* What visible token of displeasure did God manifest against this worship which Jeroboam set up?

A. He sent a prophet to the altar at Bethel, who foretold that a son of the house of David, Josiah by name, should burn the bones of Jeroboam's priests upon the altar; 1 *Kings* xiii. 1, 2.

8 *Q.* What sign did the prophet give, that this prophecy should be fulfilled?

A. The prophet foretold that the altar should be rent asunder, and the ashes poured

out, both which were fulfilled immediately: And Jeroboam's hand withered when he stretched it out to lay hold of the prophet; *verses* 3—6. though at the prayer of the prophet, God restored it again.

9 *Q.* What other token did God give of his anger against Jeroboam?

A. God threatened Jeroboam and his family with utter destruction, so that none of them should find a grave besides Abijah his youngest son, because there were found in him some good inclinations toward the God of Israel; 1 *Kings* xiv. 13.

10 *Q.* Who was Omri?

A. The captain of the host of Israel, who was made king by the people when Zimri set up himself; 1 *Kings* xvi. 16.

11 *Q.* What is recorded concerning Omri?

A. 1. That he besieged Zimri his predecessor so closely in Tirzah, the royal city, that Zimri burned himself and the palace together, and died. 2. That he built Samaria for the royal city on a hill. And 3. That he walked in all the sinful ways of Jeroboam; *verses* 17—28.

12 *Q.* Who was Ahab, and what was his character?

A. Ahab was the son of Omri, who followed the wicked ways of his predecessors: He sinned against God and man grievously, and provoked God beyond all who were before him; *verses* 29—33. and 1 *Kings* xxi. 25.

13 *Q.* How did God signify his displeasure against Ahab?

A. He sent Elijah the prophet to reprove him, and to foretel that there should be neither dew nor rain for several years, which accordingly came to pass; 1 *Kings* xvii. 1.

14 *Q.* How was Elijah himself fed during this famine?

A. He was appointed to hide himself by the brook Cherith, and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and the evening, and he drank of the water of the brook; *verses* 5, 6.

15 *Q.* Whither did the prophet go when the brook was dried up?

A. God sent him to a woman of Sarepta, near Sidon, to be maintained by her, when she had only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise; 1 *Kings* xvii. 9—13.

16 *Q.* How could this maintain the woman and her son, and the prophet?

A. God wonderfully increased the oil and the meal, so that the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, till God sent rain upon the land; *verses* 14—16.

17 *Q.* What further miracle did Elijah work in this woman's family, to prove that he was sent from God?

A. When her son died, the prophet raised him to life again; *verses* 21—24.

18 *Q.* What special deliverance did God give Israel in the time of Ahab?

A. Though Ahab was so great a sinner, yet God made Israel victorious over the Syrians who invaded them, because Benhadad the king of Syria boasted, and blasphemed God; 1 *Kings* xx. 10, 28.

19 *Q.* What were some of the special sins of Ahab against God?

A. Besides the idolatry of the calves, he also set up the idol Baal, he caused Israel to worship it, and by the influence of his wife Jezebel, slew a great number of the prophets of the Lord; 1 *Kings* xviii. 4.

20 *Q.* Were any of the prophets of the Lord saved?

A. Obadiah the governor of Ahab's house, hid a hundred of them in two caves, and

fed them with bread and water, while Elijah fled wheresoever he could find a hiding-place; *verses* 5, 6, 10.

21 *Q.* How did Elijah bring about the destruction of Baal's prophets?

A. He boldly met Ahab, and bid him summon all Israel together, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, that a sacrifice might be offered to Baal and to Jehovah, to make an experiment which was the true God.

22 *Q.* How did he convince the people that Jehovah was the true God?

A. Fire came from heaven and consumed Elijah's sacrifice after he had poured great quantities of water upon it, which the prophets of Baal attempted in vain to procure on their altar, though they cut themselves with knives, and cried aloud to their god; 1 *Kings* xvii. 17—38.

23 *Q.* What influence had this upon the people?

A. They fell upon their faces, and acknowledged Jehovah to be the true God; and then, at the command of Elijah, the people slew all the prophets of Baal; *verses* 39, 40.

24 *Q.* How did God further manifest his approbation of this conduct of Elijah?

A. He immediately sent rain, and put an end to the famine; *verses* 41, 45.

25 *Q.* What was one of the most remarkable sins of Ahab against man?

A. He coveted the vineyard of Naboth, and by the help of false witnesses stoned Naboth to death for blasphemy, and took possession of his land; 1 *Kings* xxi. 5—14.

26 *Q.* What was the manner of Ahab's death at last, after so wicked a life?

A. In opposition to the prophecy of Micaiah he went to fight with the king of Syria, and received a mortal wound; 1 *Kings* xxii. 34.

27 *Q.* Wherein did the judgment of God against Ahab appear in his death?

A. The dogs licked up his blood on that spot of ground where Naboth's blood was shed, according to the prophecy of Elijah; 1 *Kings* xxii. 38. and xxi. 19.

28 *Q.* What sort of man was Ahaziah?

A. Ahaziah the son of Ahab, who succeeded him in the kingdom, followed his wicked ways; 2 *Kings* xxii. 51.

29 *Q.* What particular crimes of Ahaziah are recorded?

A. When he was sick, he sent to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, about his recovery; and because Elijah reproved him for it, he sent three captains each with fifty men, to make Elijah their prisoner; 2 *Kings* i. 2, 9.

30 *Q.* What did Elijah do on this occasion?

A. He brought down fire from heaven, which consumed the two first of them with their troops, but he spared the third upon his intreaty, and then went down with him to king Ahaziah, and told him that he should surely die; *verses* 9—16.

31 *Q.* How did Elijah leave the world?

A. He was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind by a chariot and horses of fire, and left his mantle behind him; 2 *Kings* ii.

32 *Q.* Who succeeded Elijah in the office of a prophet?

A. Elisha, who was with him when he was taken up to heaven, and had a double portion of the spirit of Elijah given him; *verses* 9, 10.

33 *Q.* What were some of the chief prophecies and miracles of Elisha?

A. 1. He smote the waters of Jordan with Elijah's mantle, saying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" And the waters divided for him to pass over. 2. He cured the unwholesome water near Jericho, by casting salt into it. 3. He cursed some children

that mocked and reproached him, and there came two she-bears out of the wood and tore to pieces forty-two of them. 4. He brought water in a time of drought to supply three armies, *viz.* those of Edom, Judah and Israel. 5. He increased the widow's pot of oil, that it was sufficient to pay her debts, and maintain her. 6. He promised a son to the Shunamite woman who entertained him, who was before barren, and raised this son to life when he died. 7. He healed Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy by bidding him wash in Jordan. 8. He pronounced the plague of leprosy on Gehazi, his own servant, for his covetousness and lying. 9. He made the iron head of an ax float on the water, that it might be restored to its owner. 10. He discovered the king of Syria's private counsels to the king of Israel, and smote his army with blindness. 11. He foretold vast plenty on the morrow, in the midst of a siege and famine in Samaria. 12. He foretold the death of Benhadad the king of Syria, and that Hazael should succeed him and treat Israel with cruelty. See the Second Book of Kings, from the second to the eighth chapter.

34 *Q.* Who was Jehu, and how came he to the kingdom?

A. Jehu was a captain, who was anointed king by the prophet whom Elisha sent for that purpose, according to the appointment of God and Elijah; 1 *Kings* xix. 16. and 2 *Kings* ix. 1—10.

35 *Q.* What was the great work for which God raised up Jehu to the kingdom?

A. To destroy the worship of Baal, and to bring the threatened judgments of God on the house of Ahab for their wickedness; *verse* 7.

36 *Q.* How did Jehu execute this bloody work upon the house of Ahab?

A. These three ways; 1. He shot Jehoram, the son of Ahab, who was then king, with an arrow, and cast him upon the land of Naboth, whom Ahab slew. 2. He commanded Jezebel, the wicked and idolatrous queen-mother, to be thrown out of the window, and the dogs eat her up. 3. He ordered the seventy remaining sons of Ahab to be slain in Samaria, and their heads to be brought him in baskets; 2 *Kings* ix. and x.

37 *Q.* How did he destroy the worship of Baal?

A. He gathered the prophets of Baal, and his priests, and his worshippers together into his temple, under a pretence of a great sacrifice to Baal; and then commanded them all to be slain with the sword, and the images to be burned, and the temple to be destroyed; *verses* 18—28.

38 *Q.* Did Jehu continue to obey God in all things?

A. No; For though he executed the vengeance of God against Ahab, and the worshippers of Baal, yet he maintained the idolatry of Jeroboam, *viz.* the calves of Dan and Bethel; *verses* 29, 30.

39 *Q.* Who was Joash?

A. He was the son of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu, and he reigned over Israel; 2 *Kings* xiii. 10.

40 *Q.* What is remarkable in his conduct?

A. When Elisha was upon his death-bed, he came down to see him, and wept over him, yet he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam; *verse* 14.

41 *Q.* What did he do for the good of Israel?

A. According to the prophecy of dying Elisha, he smote the Syrians thrice who had oppressed Israel in the days of his father; *verses* 15—19, 25.

42 *Q.* Is there any thing of moment recorded concerning Elisha after his death?

A. They buried a man the year following in the sepulchre of Elisha, and as soon as he touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet; *verse* 21.

43 *Q.* What did Joash do against Judah?

A. When Amaziah king of Judah provoked him to war, he routed the army of Judah, and took the king prisoner; he brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and plundered the house of the Lord, and the king's house of all the gold and silver vessels; 2 *Kings* xiv. 8—14.

44 *Q.* Was there any considerable thing fell out in the reign of Pekah?

A. This Pekah joined with the king of Syria to invade Judah, but he was repulsed: In his days Tiglath-Pilezer, king of Assyria, took many cities in Galilee, and carried many of the people captive to Assyria; 2 *Kings* xiv. 29. and xvi. 5—9.

45 *Q.* Who was Hoshea, and what is recorded of him?

A. He was the last king of Israel; he slew Pekah, and made himself king; 2 *Kings* xv. 30.

46 *Q.* How came the kingdom to end in him?

A. In his days Shalmanezer, king of Assyria, took the city Samaria, bound Hoshea the king in prison, carried multitudes of Israel captive into Assyria, and distributed them into several distant countries, from which they have never returned to this day; 2 *Kings* xvii. 1—6, 23.

47 *Q.* What provoked Shalmanezer to do this?

A. Hoshea had submitted to him, and afterwards plotted and rebelled against him; *verses*, 3, 4.

48 *Q.* What provoked God to punish Israel thus?

A. The people of Israel, with all their kings, after their separation from the house of David, had been guilty of continual idolatry, in opposition to the many precepts and warnings of God, by the writings of Moses, and the voice of all the prophets; *verses* 7—23.

49 *Q.* What became of Samaria, and the other cities of Israel, when the people were driven out of them?

A. Several of the heathen nations were placed there, and each worshipped their own gods and idols: Wherefore the Lord sent lions amongst them, and destroyed several of them; *verses* 24—31.

50 *Q.* What was done upon this occasion to appease the anger of God, and save the people from the lions?

A. The king of Assyria sent a jewish priest thither, to teach them the worship of the God of Israel; *verse* 27.

51 *Q.* What was the effect of this conduct of the king of Assyria?

A. These nations feared the God of Israel, and yet they could not lay aside their own idolatries, for they continued to serve their own graven images also in many following generations; *verse* 41.

52 *Q.* But did they always continue in this mixed kind of religion?

A. In process of time they forsook their idols, worshipped the true God only, and submitted themselves to the jewish religion, so as to receive the five books of Moses: They had a temple of their own built on mount Gerizim, and in the New Testament are called Samaritans.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

1 QUESTION.

HOW many kings and rulers reigned over Judah?

Answer. Twenty, *viz.* Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehosaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah the queen, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

2 *Q.* Were all these rulers of Judah also great sinners as well as the kings of Israel?

A. A few of them were very religious, some very wicked, and others of an indifferent or mixed character.

3 *Q.* What fell out in Rehoboam's reign, after the ten tribes had made Jeroboam their king?

A. When Rehoboam raised a great army out of Judah and Benjamin to recover the ten tribes, God by his prophet forbid them to proceed; 1 *Kings* xii. 22—25.

4 *Q.* Were there no wars then between Judah and Israel?

A. Yes, in the following times there were bloody wars between them.

5 *Q.* How did the people of Judah behave themselves under the government of Rehoboam?

A. They fell into idolatry and shameful sins, whereupon God was angry, and Shishak king of Egypt plundered the temple, and the king's house of their treasures, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign; 1 *Kings* xiv. 25. So short-lived was the supreme grandeur and glory of the jewish church and state.

6 *Q.* Did Abijah the son of Rehoboam, do any thing remarkable in his reign?

A. He made a speech and pleaded against Israel, when Jeroboam led them to war against him; he reproved them for their departure from the true worship of God, and from the house of David: And when they would not hearken, but set upon him in battle, he and his army cried unto the Lord, and shouted, and slew five hundred thousand men. A brave example, and divine success; 2 *Chron.* xiii. 4—17.

7 *Q.* What is recorded concerning Asa the son of Abijah, and king of Judah?

A. That he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and destroyed the idols which had been set up in the land; 2 *Chron.* xiv. 1—5.

8 *Q.* What token of favour did God shew him?

A. When he called upon the Lord, and trusted in him, he defeated the army of the Ethiopians who came against him, though they were a thousand thousand; *verses* 9—15.

9 *Q.* Did Asa continue all his days to fear the Lord?

A. In his old age he fell into distrust of God, and he gave the treasure that remained in the house of God, and in the king's house, to the king of Syria, to guard and help him against Baasha the king of Israel; and he imprisoned the prophet which reproved him for it; 2 *Chron.* xvi. 1—10.

10 *Q.* What is remarkable in Asa's death?

A. That in the disease of his feet, which is supposed to be the gout, he sought not the Lord, but only to the physicians; and he slept with his fathers; *verses* 11—13.

11 *Q.* How did his son Jehoshaphat behave himself in the kingdom?

A. He walked in the first and best ways of his father David, and God was with him; 2 *Chron.* xvii. 3.

12 *Q.* Wherein did Jehoshaphat more particularly discover his piety and goodness?

A. He appointed levites and priests throughout all the cities of Judah, to teach the law of the Lord; and he set judges in the land, with a solemn charge to do justice without bribery; 2 *Chron.* xvii. 7—9. and xix. 5—11.

13 *Q.* Wherein did God manifest his special favour to Jehoshaphat?

A. God gave him very great treasures, and the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms round about Judah, so that for many years they made no war upon him; 2 *Chron.* xvii. 10—19.

14 *Q.* Wherein did he offend God?

A. In joining in alliance with Ahab the wicked king of Israel, whereby he was in great danger of being slain in a battle against the Syrians; 2 *Chron.* xviii. 1, 31. and xix. 2.

15 *Q.* When Moab and Ammon joined their forces against Jehoshaphat, how was he delivered from them?

A. He proclaimed a fast through the land, and in the midst of the people he prayed earnestly to the Lord, and when he went out to battle, he appointed the singers before the army to sing praises to the Lord; 2 *Chron.* xx. 1—21.

16 *Q.* What was the effect of this pious practice?

A. When they began to sing and to pray, his enemies fell upon one another till they were all slain; *verses* 22—29.

17 *Q.* Did Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat imitate his father's government in piety?

A. By no means, for he slew all his own brethren, he walked in the ways of Ahab king of Israel, and took his daughter Athaliah to wife; 2 *Chron.* xxi. 1—7.

18 *Q.* How did God testify his displeasure against Jehoram?

A. He smote Jehoram with such an incurable distemper, that his bowels fell out, and he died of sore diseases; *verses* 15—19.

19 *Q.* Who succeeded Jehoram in the kingdom?

A. Ahaziah his youngest son, for all his eldest were slain in the camp by the Arabians; 2 *Chron.* xxii. 1.

20 *Q.* What was the behaviour and the fate of Ahaziah king of Judah?

A. He followed the evil practices of the house of Ahab, by the persuasion of his mother Athaliah, who was the grandaughter of Omri; and when he went out with Jehoram the king of Israel against Jehu, he was slain by Jehu; 2 *Chron.* xxii. 1—9.

21 *Q.* Who succeeded to the throne of Judah when Ahaziah was dead?

A. Athaliah his mother seized the kingdom, and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah, except Joash the son of Ahaziah, an infant of a year old, who was hid in the temple; 2 *Chron.* xxii. 2, 10—12.

22 *Q.* How did Athaliah reign?

A. As she counselled her son Ahaziah before, so she herself practised the idolatry of the house of Ahab; 2 *Chron.* xxii. 3, 17. and xxiv. 7.

23 *Q.* How was Athaliah deposed?

A. Jehoiada the high-priest stirred up the captains of the army, the levites, and the chief of the people against her: He set Joash on the throne when he was seven years old,

anointed and proclaimed him king, then ordered the guards to slay Athaliah, and destroyed the worship of Baal; 2 *Chron.* xxiii. 1—15.

24 *Q.* What was the conduct of Joash in his government?

A. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest, who was his uncle: He repaired the temple, and the vessels thereof, and restored the worship of God; 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 1—15.

25 *Q.* How did Joash behave after Jehoiada's death?

A. He was persuaded to change the worship of God for idols, and most ungratefully slew Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, because he reproved the idolatry of the people; 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 17—22. *Matt.* xxiii. 35.

26 *Q.* In what manner did God punish him for his crime?

A. He sent an army of the Syrians against him, who pillaged the country; he smote him with sore diseases, and at last his own servants slew him on his bed; *verses* 23—26.

27 *Q.* How did Amaziah the son of Joash reign?

A. At first he seemed to work righteousness, and hearkened to the voice of God and his prophets; but afterwards, gaining a victory over the Edomites, he learned to worship the gods of Edom; 2 *Chron.* xxv. 1—16.

28 *Q.* How came Amaziah to meet his ruin and his death?

A. Being puffed up with his success against Edom, he challenged the king of Israel to battle, and was routed shamefully, and was slain at last by a conspiracy of his own people; 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 17—28.

29 *Q.* What was the character and reign of Uzziah the king?

A. He was made king at sixteen years old, in the room of his father Amaziah; he sought after God in the days of Zechariah the prophet, and God prospered his arms against all his enemies, and made his name great; 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 1—15.

Note, This was several hundred years before that Zechariah who prophesied after the captivity.

30 *Q.* Wherein did he provoke God afterwards?

A. His heart was lifted up by his prosperity, and he assumed the priest's-office, and burned incense in the temple, though the priests opposed him; *verse* 16.

31 *Q.* What was his punishment for this crime?

A. While he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, the leprosy rose up in his forehead, and he continued a leper till his death; *verse* 19.

32 *Q.* Is there any thing very remarkable in the reign of Jotham, the son of Uzziah?

A. He was a good king, and God blessed his arms, so that he brought the Ammonites under tribute; 2 *Chron.* xxvii. 1—6.

33 *Q.* How did Ahaz, the son of Jotham, behave himself?

A. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, made images for Baal, and offered his children in sacrifice by fire, after the abominations of the heathen; 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 1—4.

34 *Q.* How did God shew his displeasure against Ahaz?

A. His land was invaded by the king of Syria, and by the king of Israel; multitudes of his people were slain, and many captives were carried to Damascus and to Samaria, though the Israelites restored their captives again at the word of the prophet Oded; *verses* 5—15.

35 *Q.* What further iniquities of Ahaz are recorded?

A. That he set aside the brazen altar which was before the Lord, and set up another in the court of the temple, according to the pattern of an altar he had seen at Damascus, and at last fell in with the idolatry of the heathen nations; 2 *Kings* xvi. 10. 2 *Chron.* xxviii.

36 *Q.* What was one particular aggravation of his crimes?

A. That even in the time of his distress he sinned the more against God; and because God did not help him, he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus; he cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, shut up the doors of the temple, and set up idols in Jerusalem, and through all the land; 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 22—25.

37 *Q.* Did Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, continue in the sins of his father?

A. No; but he made a great reformation, not only in Judah, but also in Ephraim and Manasseh; he brake the images, cut down the groves, destroyed their altars, repaired the temple, and restored the worship of the true God there; 2 *Chron.* xxix. and xxxi.

38 *Q.* What peculiar instance did he give of his zeal against all manner of idolatry?

A. He brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made in the wilderness, because the people burned incense to it; 2 *Kings* xviii. 4.

39 *Q.* In what manner did he keep the passover?

A. He sent to all Israel as well as to Judah to invite them to keep the passover at Jerusalem, according to the appointment of God; 2 *Chron.* xxx. 1—12.

Though Hezekiah, king of Judah, began this reformation in the first year of his reign, yet it might not be carried to this height till the sixth or seventh year; at which time there was no king in Israel, Hoshea, the last king, being taken and imprisoned by the king of Assyria, and a great part of the people being carried into captivity, in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign. See 2 *Chron.* xxix. 3. and 2 *Kings* xviii. 9—11.

40 *Q.* Did the other tribes of Israel come at his invitation?

A. Some mocked the message, but many out of several tribes came to the passover, so that there was not the like since the time of Solomon; *verses* 18—26.

41 *Q.* Were all these people sufficiently purified to keep the passover?

A. No, but at the prayer of Hezekiah the Lord pardoned and accepted them, though several things in this passover were not exactly conformable to the holy institution; *verses* 18—20.

42 *Q.* Wherein did God shew his acceptance of Hezekiah's zeal and piety?

A. God prospered him in his wars against his enemies, and enabled him to cast off the yoke of the king of Assyria while he trusted in him; 2 *Kings* xvii. 7, 8.

43 *Q.* What weakness was Hezekiah guilty of afterward, when Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded Judah?

A. He bribed him to depart with gold and silver taken from the house of God; *verses* 13—16.

44 *Q.* What success had this conduct of Hezekiah?

A. Very ill success; for some few years after Sennacherib sent an army to take Jerusalem; 2 *Kings* xviii. 9—13, 17.

45 *Q.* What did Hezekiah do in this distress?

A. When Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh with blasphemies against God, and threatenings against the people, Hezekiah humbled himself greatly, and spread the railing letter before the Lord in the temple, and prayed earnestly to God for deliverance; 1 *Kings* xviii. and xix.

46 *Q.* What was the success of Hezekiah's prayer?

A. Isaiah the prophet assured him of deliverance; and the angel of the Lord slew in the camp of the Assyrians, one hundred and fourscore and five thousand men at once; 2 *Kings* xix. 20—35.

47 *Q.* What further favour did Hezekiah receive from God?

A. When he was sick, near to death, God heard his prayer, and assured him he should live fifteen years longer; 2 *Kings* xx. 1—6.

48 *Q.* What sign did God give him to confirm his faith in this promise?

A. The shadow returned backward ten degrees upon the dial of Ahaz; *verses* 8—11.

49 *Q.* Wherein did Hezekiah misbehave himself after he had received all this mercy?

A. In the vanity and pride of his heart, he shewed the messengers of the king of Babylon all his treasures; *verses* 12, 13. and 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 31.

50 *Q.* How was Hezekiah's pride punished?

A. God told him by the prophet Isaiah, that all these treasures should be carried into Babylon; but because Hezekiah humbled himself, God deferred the execution of it till after his death; 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 25, 26.

51 *Q.* What was the character and the government of his son Manasseh?

A. He forsook the good ways of his father Hezekiah, he brought in idolatry of many kinds; he worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; he made his son pass through the fire; he used enchantments, and shed much innocent blood; 2 *Kings* xxi. 2—16. 2 *Chron.* xxxiii.

52 *Q.* How were his transgressions punished?

A. The captains of the host of Assyria came up against Manasseh, took him among the thorns, bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon; 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11.

53 *Q.* How did Manasseh behave in his afflictions?

A. He humbled himself greatly before God in prayer, whereupon God restored him to his kingdom, where he wrought a great reformation; *verses* 12—16.

54 *Q.* What is written concerning Amon the son of Manasseh?

A. Amon restored the idolatry which Manasseh had once set up, but he never repented, or returned to God, as his father had done, and he was slain by his own servants; 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 20—25.

55 *Q.* What is worthy of notice in the reign of Josiah the son of Amon?

A. At eight years old he began his reign, at sixteen he sought after God, and at twenty he destroyed the altar and idols which his father Amon, the son of Manasseh, set up; 2 *Kings* xxiii. 3—14. 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 1—7.

56 *Q.* How did he carry on this work of reformation?

A. He repaired the temple, and restored the worship of God; and finding a book of the law of the Lord by Moses, he rent his clothes, and mourned to think how little this law had been observed; *verses* 18, 19.

57 *Q.* What further use did he make of this book?

A. He read the words of it in the ears of all the elders of Judah, and the people, the priests, and the prophets, and made a covenant with the people of Judah, to perform what was written in this book; 2 *Kings* xxiii. 2, 3.

58 *Q.* Did he make also any reformation in Israel?

A. The kingdom of Israel being now destroyed by the king of Assyria, Josiah spread his influence over those who remained in the land, and many of Israel, as well as of Judah, came to keep the passover; 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 17.

59 *Q.* Were not many of Israel present also at Hezekiah's passover? Wherein then did this passover of Josiah exceed that in the days of Hezekiah?

A. In the exact conformity of it to all the rules appointed by Moses, so that no such passover had been kept since the days of Samuel the prophet; 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 18.

60 *Q.* Did Josiah destroy all the remainder of the idolatry of Israel, which Jeroboam set up at Dan and Bethel?

A. Yes, and he slew the priests of the high places, and burned the bones of the priests that had been buried there, upon the altar, according to the word which the old prophet spake to Jeroboam; 2 *Kings* xxiii. 15—20. 1 *Kings* xiii. 2.

61 *Q.* How came Josiah by his death?

A. He went out to fight with the king of Egypt without the direction of God, and he was slain, and great lamentation was made for him; 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 20—25.

62 *Q.* Who succeeded Josiah in the kingdom?

A. His son Jehoahaz, who, when he had reigned three months, was put in bonds by the king of Egypt, was carried thither, and there he died; 2 *Kings* xxiii. 31—34.

63 *Q.* Whom did the king of Egypt make king in his room?

A. Eliakim his brother, and gave him the name of Jehoiakim; 2 *Kings* xxiii. 34.

64 *Q.* What sort of governor was Jehoiakim, and what was his end?

A. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, several neighbour nations beset him round about, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, set up his forces against him, took some captives, bound the king in fetters, and he died in shame, his dead body being cast without the gates of Jerusalem, and without a burial; and his young son Jehoiachin reigned in his stead; 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 5—8. *Dan.* i. 1—3. *Jer.* xxii. 18, 19.

65 *Q.* What became of this Jehoiachin, who is also called Jechoniah and Coniah?

A. When he had reigned three months, Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem, and carried him to Babylon, together with ten thousand captives, and rich treasures of silver and gold that remained in the temple, and in the king's house; 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8—17. *Jer.* xxii. 24—30.

66 *Q.* Was there any king in Judah after Jehoiachin?

A. Yes, the last king was Zedekiah, his father's brother, whom Nebuchadnezzar made king in Jerusalem; *verses* 17, 18.

67 *Q.* What fell out in the days of Zedekiah?

A. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he had sworn subjection by the name of the true God; whereupon Nebuchadnezzar came up and took the city Jerusalem again, after a siege of two years; 2 *Kings* xxv. 1—4.

68 *Q.* How did he punish Zedekiah for his rebellion?

A. When Zedekiah fled from the city he was seized by the Babylonians; Nebuchadnezzar ordered his sons to be slain before his face, then his eyes were put out, he was bound with fetters of brass, and carried to Babylon, and there was no more king in Judah; *verses* 6, 7. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 13.

69 *Q.* What became of the city and temple at this time?

A. The king of Babylon burned the temple of the Lord, the palace of the king, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he brake down the walls of the city, and carried away the rest of the people captive; together with all the vessels of gold, silver, and brass, great and small, that belonged to the temple; 2 *Kings* xxv. 8—17.

70 *Q.* But were the people punished thus for the sins of their kings?

A. The princes, and the priests, and the people, had a large share in the common idolatry and wickedness, together with the kings, and that in opposition to all the warnings of their prophets, whereby God was provoked to punish them all; 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14—21.

71 *Q.* Was there any ruler of the scattered people that remained in the land of Israel?

A. Gedaliah was made governor by the king of Babylon, but he was slain in a little time by a faction under Ishmael, one of the seed royal; and there was nothing but confusion and disorder in the land; 2 *Kings* xxv. 22—26.

72 *Q.* What became of the people afterward?

A. Johanan the son of Kareah, one of the captains under Gedaliah, routed Ishmael, and drove him out of the land; yet being afraid of the anger of the king of Babylon, and his resentment of the murder of Gedaliah his governor, he was tempted to fly into Egypt, and to carry most of the people thither with him, where they were dispersed into several cities; *Jer.* xli. 13—18. and xli. and xliii.

73 *Q.* Was this done by any divine order?

A. No; but directly against the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet, who was left among them in the land; and they carried him also into Egypt with them; *Jer.* xliii. 1—9.

74 *Q.* Did the Jews behave themselves better in Egypt after all their afflictions and distresses?

A. They practised idolatry in Egypt with insolence, in opposition to the reproofs of Jeremiah the prophet; *Jer.* xliv.

75 *Q.* Did they perish there or return?

A. Jeremiah was ordered by the Lord to foretel the destruction of Egypt by the king of Babylon, and to denounce utmost calamities and death, by sword and famine, upon the Jews that sojourned there; and that but a very small number of them should ever return to the land of Judah, though he foretold the return of their brethren from their captivity in Babylon; *Jer.* xliii. 9. and xliv. 11, 28—30.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE RETURN OF THE JEWS FROM CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON, AND THE REBUILDING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM, AND THE TEMPLE.

1 QUESTION.

HOW long did the nation of the Jews continue in their captivity, and their land lie desolate?

Answer. Though the land lay not utterly desolate till the final destruction of Jerusalem, in the days of Zedekiah, which was between fifty and sixty years before their first release; yet, from their first captivity by Nebuchadnezzar in former reigns, their land was in some measure desolate seventy years, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah; See 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 21. *Jer.* xxv. 11, 12.

Here let it be observed, that as there were several seasons, and under different kings, when part of the children of Israel and Judah were carried into captivity, and several periods whence their desolations may commence; so there were several seasons also of

their return and restoration: But the chief duration of their captivity and desolate circumstances was seventy years; See 2 *Kings* xxiv. 1, 2, 10—14. and xxv. 11. compared with *Ezra* i. 1, 2. and vi. 1—12. and vii. 7. and *Nehem.* ii. 1—11.

2 *Q.* Who gave them release from their captivity in Babylon?

A. When Babylon was taken by Cyrus, the general of the army under Darius, the king of the Medes, the Assyrian or Babylonish empire was finished. After Darius's death, Cyrus himself became king of Persia, and he not only gave the people of the Jews a release, but gave them also a commission to rebuild the temple, and restored to them the vessels of gold and silver; and this he did by the hand of Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah; *Ezra.* i. 7—11.

Note, Now was that prophecy fulfilled which Isaiah pronounced above a hundred years before; *Isaiah* xliv. 28. that it was Cyrus who should say to Jerusalem, "Be thou built," and to the temple, "Be thy foundation laid;" and *chap.* xiv. 13. who should build the city of God, and release his captives.

3 *Q.* Which of the tribes did accept of this commission and return to their own land?

A. There were many persons and families of several tribes of Israel, who took this opportunity of returning; yet it was chiefly those of Judah and Benjamin, with the priests and several of the levites, who returned, and were now all united under the name of Jews; *Ezra* i. 5. and iv. 12.

4 *Q.* Who were their first leaders and directors?

A. Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah, of the seed royal, whose Chaldaic or Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar; he was their prince or captain, and Jeshua or Joshua was their high-priest; *Ezra.* i. 11. and ii. 2. and iii. 8. compared with v. 14—16. and *Zech.* iii. and iv.

Note, This Sheshbazzar, or Zerubbabel, was the son of Salathiel, the son of Jehoiachin, or Jechoniah, king of Judah: He was made governor of the land, under the title of Tirshatha, by a commission from Cyrus. Jeshua was the son of Jozadak or Josedech, the son of Seraiah who was high-priest when Jerusalem was destroyed, and who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar.

5 *Q.* What was the first thing they did after their return?

A. They made a large contribution toward the rebuilding of the temple, they gathered themselves together to Jerusalem, they set up the altar of the God of Israel, and offered sacrifices upon it; *Ezra* ii. 68. and iii. 1—6.

6 *Q.* In what manner did they lay the foundation of the temple?

A. While the builders laid the foundation, the priests and the levites sung and praised the Lord with trumpets, and other instruments, after the ordinance of David; *Ezra* iii. 10, 11.

7 *Q.* What remarkable occurrences attended the laying of the foundation of the temple?

A. While the younger part of the people shouted for joy, many of the ancient fathers wept with a loud voice, when they remembered how much more glorious the first temple was than the second was like to be; *verses* 12, 13. and *Hag.* ii. 3.

Here it may be observed, that though the foundation of the second temple stood on the same compass of ground as the first, yet a company of poor exiles returning from a long captivity, could not promise or hope for so glorious a building as the temple of

Solomon, neither in the richness of the materials, nor in the magnificence and curiosity of the workmanship. See Dr. Prideaux's Connection, Vol. I. p. 143. The Jews also generally suppose five things to be wanting in the second temple, after it was finished, which did belong to the first; namely, 1. The ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat which was upon it, with the cherubs of gold, together with the tables of stone in which the law was written, which were in the ark when it was brought into Solomon's temple; 1 *Kings* viii. 9. 2 *Chron.* v. 10. though one would think they should have made an ark and a mercy-seat, before which the high-priest should officiate once a year. Some learned men supposed there was such an ark made, and that Ezra's correct copy of the Bible was laid up in it: And that it is in imitation of this, that the present Jews in all their synagogues have such an ark or coffer, wherein they keep the law. 2. The Shechinah, or divine presence, in a cloud of glory on the mercy-seat. 3. The urim and thummim, whence the oracle came, or divine answers to their enquiries. 4. The holy fire upon the altar, which came from heaven. 5. The spirit of prophecy. For though Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi lived while the second temple was building, and prophesied after it was built, yet on their death the prophetic spirit ceased from among them.

8 *Q.* What was the first hinderance they found in the building of the temple?

A. The Samaritans desired to join with them in their building, and because the Jews forbid them, they gave them continual trouble in the days of Cyrus; *Ezra* iv. 1—5.

9 *Q.* What was the second hinderance they met with?

A. When Artaxerxes the first came to the throne of Persia, these people wrote an accusation against the Jews, that the city of Jerusalem had been rebellious in former times; whereupon Artaxerxes caused the work to cease till the second year of Darius; *verses* 7—24.

Note, This was not Darius the first king, and he who took Babylon, and released Daniel from the lions den; but another, who reigned several years after him, and was called Darius Hystaspes, as the best authors assert: And this also was long before that Darius whom Alexander subdued, and put an end to the Persian kingdom. Here let it be observed in general, that it is not a very easy matter for learned men to agree exactly in adjusting the time of all these events, and the particular accomplishment of every prophecy, because there were several kings of the same name; as, three or four Artaxerxes, and three or more Dariuses, &c. And there were four decrees from the kings of Persia in favour of the Jews: The first from Cyrus to Zerubbabel, or Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah; *Ezra* i. 1—8. The second from Darius the second, to the enemies of the Jews, to forbid their hinderance of the work; *Ezra* vi. 1—7. The third from Artaxerxes the second to Ezra, recorded in *Ezra* vii. 11. The fourth from the same Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, written in *Nehem.* ii. 1—9.

10 *Q.* Who persuaded the Jews to go on with their work under the reign of this Darius?

A. The prophets of God which were with them encouraged and required them in the name of the Lord, to go on with the work of the temple; for several of them were too negligent, and God punished them for it with scarcity of corn and wine; *Ezra* v. 1, 2. *Hag.* i. 2—11. *Zech.* i. 7—17. and iii. and iv.

11 *Q.* What encouragement did they meet with from the Persian court?

A. The governors of the provinces at this time seeing them renew their building, sent

to enquire concerning the order which Cyrus gave for it: And Darius having found this order among the records of Babylon, gave a fresh command for the rebuilding of the house of God; *Ezra* v. 3—17. and vi. 1—14.

12 *Q.* When was the temple finished?

A. Through many delays, arising partly from the negligence of the Jews, partly from the opposition of their enemies, it was twenty years in building; nor was it finished till the sixth year of the reign of Darius, at which time they dedicated it with many sacrifices, and kept the passover with joy; *Ezra* vi. 15—22.

Here it may be worthy of our observation, that the threatened destruction of Babylon kept pace with the promised restoration and joy of the Jews. It was Cyrus, who as general of the army of Darius the first, took Babylon by siege with blood and slaughter, who also released the captive Jews when he came to be king of Persia. Then the river was turned in upon the country round it, which Isaiah foretold; chapter xiv. 23. "And it became a possession for bitterns, and pools of water, and the sea covered it." Yet Babylon was not then destroyed: But when the Babylonians revolted in the fifth year of Darius Hystaspes, and he besieged them with a vast army, their desolation was very great: They themselves slew almost all their women and young children to make their provisions hold out; then the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled; *Isaiah* xlvii. 9. "Two things shall come to them in one day, the loss of children and widowhood." Darius took the city in the end of the sixth year of his reign, at which time the jewish temple was finished, he gave them up to the plunder of his Persian army, impaled three thousand, who were chief actors in the revolt, beat their walls down from two hundred cubits high to fifty cubits. After this, Babylon languished a while, and at last ended in a perpetual desolation.

13 *Q.* What further encouragement did the Jews receive from another king Artaxerxes?

A. Artaxerxes the second, king of Persia, gave Ezra the priest and scribe a letter and decree, to encourage the Jews yet remaining in Babylon to go up to Jerusalem and establish the worship of the true God there; *Ezra* vii. 11—26.

Note, This second Artaxerxes is supposed by Dr. Prideaux to be Artaxerxes Longimanus, as the heathen historians call him, and to be that same Ahasuerus who made Esther his queen, and so became very friendly to the Jews.

14 *Q.* How did the king enable them to fulfil this decree?

A. The king and his counsellors freely offered much silver and gold for this work, and being sensible of the greatness and power of the God of the Jews, whom he calls the God of heaven, he sought to secure his favour for himself and his family, and pronounced a speedy sentence of death, banishment, loss of goods, or imprisonment, on those who should dare to hinder this building; *verses* 15, 16, 17, 23, 26.

15 *Q.* What did Ezra do in his journey to Jerusalem?

A. He proclaimed a day of fasting and prayer to seek the assistance of God; for he was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers to be their guard, because he had told the king of the power and the mercy of their God; *Ezra* viii. 21, 22.

16 *Q.* What did Ezra do when he came to Jerusalem?

A. He delivered the orders of the king to the governors of the provinces, and the gold and silver to those who had the care of the building, and so promoted the work; *verses* 33—36.

17 *Q.* What reformation did Ezra work among the people?

A. When he was informed that many of the Jews had mingled themselves in marriages with the heathens, he, together with the more religious part of the Jews, humbled themselves before God for all their former iniquities in an excellent prayer, and brought them into a covenant and an oath to put away their strange wives; *Ezra* ix. and x.

Note, None of the Jews of either sex might marry with gentiles of any nation, unless they were made proselytes; and even then they suppose the Canaanites of the seven nations, *Deut.* vii. and the males among the Moabites and Ammonites, to be excluded for ever, as they interpret; *Deut.* xxiii. 3.

18 *Q.* Did the Jews rebuild the city of Jerusalem?

A. Yes, for the Babylonian army had broke down the walls, and burned the gates of it; *Nehem.* i. 3.

19 *Q.* Whom did God raise up to carry on the rebuilding of the city?

A. Nehemiah the Jew, who was cupbearer to Artaxerxes the king of Persia; *Nehem.* i. 11.

20 *Q.* How was Nehemiah engaged herein?

A. When he heard of the continuance of the desolations made by the enemies, he fasted and prayed to God, and then he obtained leave of Artaxerxes the king to go up to Jerusalem, and rebuild the city of the sepulchres of his fathers; *Nehem.* ii. 1—7.

21 *Q.* What further encouragement did Nehemiah receive from the king?

A. He received orders for the governors of the provinces to assist him, and to give him timber out of the king's forest; *verses* 7, 8.

22 *Q.* How did Nehemiah begin his work?

A. He rode round the city by night, and took a private survey of the ruins thereof, and appointed a particular part of the walls and the gates to be repaired by particular persons and their companies; *Nehem.* ii. and iii.

23 *Q.* What opposition did the Jews meet with in this part of their work?

A. Sanballat the Samaritan, and Tobiah the Ammonite, and their accomplices, at first laughed the Jews to scorn, and then conspired to fight against them while they were at work; *Nehem.* iv. 1—7.

24 *Q.* How did Nehemiah prevent the mischief they designed?

A. He encouraged the Jews to trust in their God, and appointed every man that laboured in the work to have a weapon ready to defend himself; *verses* 13—23.

25 *Q.* What reformation did Nehemiah work among them?

A. He reproved those that took usury, and oppressed their brethren: And he set himself for an example, who, though he was governor twelve years, took no salary, but maintained himself and one hundred and fifty Jews at his own charge; *Nehem.* v. 7—19.

26 *Q.* In what manner did they worship God when the city was built?

A. On the first day of the seventh month all the people were gathered together in one street, and Ezra the priest and scribe read in the book of the law, and gave the sense of the words, that they might see their past sins and errors, and might be instructed to yield a more regular and exact obedience for time to come: And this being done, he blessed the great God, and all the people answered *Amen, Amen;* Nehem. viii. 1—8.

Note, It is a remark of Doctor Prideaux, that though Ezra's authority and government expired before this time, yet he went on as a skilful scribe of the law of God, to

preach righteousness, to perfect the reformation, to gather the several parts of scripture together, to set forth correct copies of them, and to bring all things in church and state to the rules thereof; and this he did by the assistance of the next governor Nehemiah, doing the same things by his authority, which before he did by his own.

27 *Q.* How did they keep the feast of tabernacles?

A. By dwelling in booths made of branches of trees seven days together, as God had commanded by Moses, and they read in the book of the law every day of the seven, and explained it; *verses* 13—18.

28 *Q.* How did they keep a fast on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month?

A. One fourth part of the day they confessed their sins, and another fourth part they read in the book of the law, and then they entered into a covenant, with an oath to be the Lord's people, and the princes and the priests and the levites sealed it; *Nehem.* ix. and x. 1, 2.

29 *Q.* How were the people disposed of in their habitations?

A. The rulers dwelled at Jerusalem: The rest of the priests and the people cast lots to bring one in ten to dwell at Jerusalem, and nine parts in the other cities, that the land might be peopled; *Nehem.* xi.

30 *Q.* How was the wall of Jerusalem the holy city dedicated?

A. The levites came from all places to Jerusalem, and joined with the priests and the rulers in two large companies, and gave thanks and offered sacrifices, and sung the praises of God, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off; *Nehem.* xii. 27—43.

31 *Q.* What further reformation did Nehemiah bring in among the people?

A. He turned Tobiah the Ammonite out of his lodging in the temple which Eliashib the high-priest had prepared for him; he established the portion of the fruits of the earth which belonged to the levites; he forbid the profanation of the sabbath, by buying and selling, and bearing burdens; and punished the Jews who married strange wives; *Nehem.* xiii. 4—29.

32 *Q.* What remarkable instance did Nehemiah give of his zeal in punishing those who married strangers?

A. He drove away one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high-priest, for marrying the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, who had hindered the Jews so much in their building several years before; *verse* 28.

Note, This young man's name was Manasseh; as Josephus informs us.

33 *Q.* Had Nehemiah no prophet to assist him in this difficult work?

A. It is supposed that Malachi, the last of the prophets, prophesied about this time, for he doth not reprove them for neglect of building, as Haggai did; *Hag.* i. 4, 9. nor does he speak of the finishing of the temple, as Zechariah did; *chap.* iv. vii. ix. but supposing that already done, he reproves them about their marriage of strangers, and of several wives, or of taking concubines; *Mal.* ii. 11, 14, 16. and their robbing God of their tithes; *chap.* iii. 1—12. and their polluting the altar, and neglect of offering God the best; *chap.* i. 6—14. which were the very things which Nehemiah corrected in his last reformation.

Thus far the holy scripture has delivered down to us the history of the transactions of God with men, and particularly with his own people, the nation of Israel, in a long and continued succession of events from the creation of the world to the return of the

Jews from the captivity of Babylon, and the settling of the church and state under Nehemiah, whom the king of Persia made governor over the land.

There are several other historical matters related in scripture, which belong to particular persons; the most considerable of them are the histories of Job, and Jonah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Esther.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HISTORY OF JOB.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Job?

Answer. A most religious man in the land of Uz, who had ten children, and very great riches; *Job* i. 1—3.

2 *Q.* In what age of the world is Job supposed to have lived?

A. In, or before the days of Moses, because there is not the least intimation of any of the transactions of God with Israel in the whole book of Job.

3 *Q.* What particular act of piety is related of him in his prosperous state?

A. When his children had been feasting each other in their turns, Job offered sacrifices for them, lest they should have sinned and provoked God in the seasons of their mirth; *verses* 4, 5.

4 *Q.* What were the afflictions that fell upon Job?

A. God permitted the devil, by kindling of lightning, and by stirring up robbers and plunderers among his heathen neighbours, to bereave him of all his cattle and his wealth in one day, and to destroy all his children, even seven sons and three daughters, by a tempest which blew down the house in which they were feasting; *verses* 6—19.

5 *Q.* Was the devil suffered to vent his malice upon the person of Job?

A. Yes, God permitted him to smite Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; *Job* ii. 6, 7.

6 *Q.* What was the design of God in these providences toward Job?

A. To try the strength of his piety, and to set him up as an example of patience, both in the exercise of it, and in the rewards of it; *Job* xxiii. 10. *James* v. 11.

7 *Q.* What was the behaviour of Job under this trial?

A. He blessed the name of the Lord, and did not murmur at his providence; *Job* i. 20—22. and ii. 10.

8 *Q.* What was a further aggravation of Job's distress?

A. That his wife tempted him to abandon all religion, because God suffered him to be thus afflicted; *Job* ii. 9, 10.

9 *Q.* Had Job any comforter?

A. Three friends came from the neighbouring places to mourn with him and comfort him; *verse* 11.

10 *Q.* How long did his patience continue in this perfect exercise of it?

A. Seven days he sat down in ashes, and was silent under the hand of God; *verse* 13.

11 *Q.* Wherein did any impatience of Job at first appear?

A. In cursing the day on which he was born; *Job* iii. 1—26.

12 *Q.* What were the sentiments of Job's three friends on this mournful occasion, and how did they carry it towards him?

A. When they saw him to be so dreadfully afflicted, they rashly concluded he had been guilty of very great sins, notwithstanding his outward profession of piety, and therefore they severely reproved him for his grievous complaints; *chap.* iv, &c.

13 *Q.* How did Job answer to their charges?

A. He maintained against them all this great truth, that God did sometimes afflict those who were innocent, for wise and unsearchable reasons; and he vindicated his own innocence, placing his trust in God; *chap.* ix. &c.

14 *Q.* Wherein did Job fail in his duty towards God in this matter?

A. Under the violence of his distress, and the unjust accusations of his friends, he sometimes spoke words of unreasonable despair, and sometimes he used rash and unbecoming language against the great God, and vindicated himself too much, as though he had been perfectly innocent before God, as well as before men; *chap.* vi. and vii. &c.

15 *Q.* How was the controversy between Job and his friends compromised at last?

A. Elihu, a fourth friend, who was younger than the rest, and had come to visit him, took a middle way to end this controversy, and spoke more agreeably to the truth: And though he reproved the three friends for asserting that God would never afflict any innocent man so much as Job was afflicted, yet he severely reproved Job for insisting so much on his own innocence before God; *chap.* xxxii. xxxiii. &c.

16 *Q.* What was the foundation of Elihu's argument on this occasion?

A. The supreme majesty and holiness of God, the meanness and sinfulness of the best of men in his sight, his sovereign dominion over all things, and the unsearchableness of his wisdom and his conduct toward men; *chap.* xxxiii. xxxvi. &c.

17 *Q.* How did God himself manifestly engage in deciding this controversy?

A. He greatly confirmed the sentiments and opinions of Elihu, by asserting and displaying his own supreme wisdom and power, his grandeur and dominion over all things, by a voice out of the whirlwind; *chap.* xxxv. &c.

18 *Q.* What effect had this upon his servant Job?

A. Job confessed his folly, abhorred himself for his sin under the apprehension of the holiness and the majesty of God, and repented in dust and ashes; *Job* xlii. 1—6.

19 *Q.* How did God deal with the three friends of Job?

A. He disapproved of their false accusations of Job, and their wrong sentiments concerning God himself and his conduct, and bid them offer a sacrifice of atonement, and Job to pray for them; *verses* 7, 8.

20 *Q.* What tokens of approbation and favour did God shew to Job?

A. While Job prayed for his friends, God released him from all his afflictions, and afterward gave him ten children, as he had at first, he doubled his estate, and prolonged his life to four generations; *chap.* xlii. 10—17.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HISTORY OF JONAH.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Jonah?

Answer. A prophet who lived about the time of Jeroboam the second, the king of Israel; *Jonah* i. 1. 2 *Kings* xiv. 25.

There is no need of particular citations of chapter and verse for the history of Jonah, since the whole is continued in four short chapters.

2 *Q.* Whither did God send him?

A. He was sent to Nineveh, to pronounce destruction upon that great city for their wickedness.

3 *Q.* How did Jonah disobey God?

A. He took shipping and fled toward Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, because he supposed that the mercy of God would spare Nineveh after he had pronounced destruction upon it, and then he should be counted a false prophet.

4 *Q.* What befell him in this voyage?

A. There arose a terrible tempest, which endangered the ship; and Jonah being conscious of his own guilt, advised the sailors to cast him into the sea, and then the storm ceased.

5 *Q.* What became of Jonah?

A. A great fish swallowed him up, and he continued in the bowels of the fish three days and three nights.

6 *Q.* Did he ever come to the shore again?

A. At his repentance and earnest prayer, God commanded the fish to vomit out Jonah upon the dry land; *Jonah* ii.

7 *Q.* What service did God assign to Jonah after this great deliverance?

A. He sent him the second time to Nineveh to preach destruction against it within forty days; *Jonah* iii.

8 *Q.* What effect had his preaching upon the people?

A. The king and the people put on sackcloth, mourned for their sins, turned from their evil ways, and cried mightily to God for mercy, whereupon God withheld the punishment which he threatened.

9 *Q.* How did Jonah resent this merciful dealing of God with Nineveh?

A. He feared he should be counted a false prophet, and in an angry temper desired God to take away his life; *Jonah* iv.

10 *Q.* What did God do to convince him of the unreasonableness of his anger?

A. He made a gourd grow up in a night, which sheltered him from the heat of the sun, and he caused it to wither the next day; upon which Jonah murmured against God.

11 *Q.* How did God argue with Jonah on this occurrence?

A. God reproved the prophet, that he should be so much concerned about a gourd, a senseless plant which grew up in one night, and only afforded him some conveniency of life; and that he should be no more concerned about the lives of so great and populous a city, which, besides men and women, had above sixscore thousand children in it.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HISTORY OF JEREMIAH.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Jeremiah?

Answer. One of the priests in the land of Benjamin, whom God called to be a prophet when he was very young, in the days of Josiah king of Judah; *Jer.* i. 1—7.

2 *Q.* What encouragement had he when he was so young to pronounce the judgments of God against the people?

A. God put forth his hand and touched his mouth, to signify his divine inspiration, and promised his presence with him to deliver him from all that should oppose him; *verses* 7—19.

3 *Q.* What was the chief message with which Jeremiah was sent to the people, and to the princes and kings of Judah?

A. That Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the people and the princes should be carried away captive into Babylon, because of their sins, and remain there seventy years. From *chap.* vii. to xxv. 11, 12.

4 *Q.* By what methods did Jeremiah set before them their sins and these judgments of God?

A. By some very plain and direct speeches, by an example of the Rechabites set before them, and by some parables or emblems.

5 *Q.* How did Jeremiah shew them the heinousness of their sins by a view of the example of the Rechabites?

A. Since all the family of Rechab abstained from wine, which is no unlawful liquor, merely because Jonadab their father forbid them; much more should the Jews have abstained from those practices which are utterly unlawful, when the God of Israel had forbid them; *Jer.* xxxv. 1—11, 13—19.

6 *Q.* What were some of the emblems by which God ordered Jeremiah to foretel their calamities?

A. A linen girdle, a potter's vessel, an earthen bottle, yokes of wood and of iron, &c.

7 *Q.* What was designed by the linen girdle?

A. Jeremiah was commanded to hide it in the hole of a rock near the river Euphrates, and when he sought it again, it was quite spoiled; so God decreed to spoil the pride of Jerusalem by the nation that dwelled near Euphrates, that is, Assyria; *Jer.* xiii. 1—11.

8 *Q.* What was intended by the potter's vessel?

A. As when the vessel of clay was spoiled in the making, the form of it was changed, and it was moulded up into another vessel, as the potter pleased; so God declared his power over the house of Israel, to manage and dispose of them as he pleased, and that he would change his providences and their state, according to their behaviour; *Jer.* xviii. 2—17.

9 *Q.* What further lesson was taught by an earthen bottle?

A. Jeremiah was commanded to break the bottle in the sight of the priests and the elders, and to declare, "Thus saith the Lord, even so will I break this nation and this city,—that it shall not be made whole again." *Jer.* xix. 11.

10 *Q.* What did Jeremiah teach them by the emblems of bonds and yokes?

A. In the days of Jehoiakim king of Judah God commanded Jeremiah to make bonds and yokes, and put them upon his own neck, and then to send them to the kings of the nations round about, to assure them that they should all be made subject to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; *Jer.* xxvii. 1—12.

11 *Q.* Who were Jeremiah's chief enemies?

A. The priests and the false prophets, who would have put him to death in the reign of Jehoiakim; *Jer.* xxvi. 1—8.

12 *Q.* Who saved Jeremiah at that time?

A. The princes and the people saved him from death, though the king slew Urijah the prophet, who confirmed the words of Jeremiah; *verses* 10—24.

13 *Q.* What abuses did Jeremiah receive from Pashur the priest?

A. Pashur smote the prophet, and put him in the stocks; *Jer.* xx. 1, 2.

14 *Q.* What evil was denounced against Pashur on this account?

A. God changed his name to Magor-missabib, to denote that he should be a terror to himself and to all his friends; and foretold that he should be led captive to Babylon, and die there; *verses* 3—6.

15 *Q.* How did Jeremiah's patience hold out under the many injuries he received?

A. In the main he continued to trust in God, but once he murmured against God, refused to prophesy, and cursed the day of his birth; *verses* 7—18.

16 *Q.* In what manner did God overcome his murmuring and his disobedience?

A. The word of the Lord was in his heart like a burning fire, shut up in his bones, and he could not forbear speaking; *verse* 9.

17 *Q.* How did Jeremiah publish his prophecies when he could not appear in public himself, being shut up in prison?

A. He commanded Baruch the scribe to write the words of his prophecies from his mouth in the volume of a book, and to read them in the ears of the people in the temple on a fast-day; *Jer.* xxxvi. 1—10.

18 *Q.* What effect had this upon Jehoiakim the king?

A. When he heard of it he sent for the volume, read a little of it, cut it with a penknife, and burned it in the fire, and then sent to seize Jeremiah and Baruch; but God by his kind providence kept them hid from the king; *verses* 20—26.

19 *Q.* What was the next message from God to Jeremiah?

A. That he should take another volume, and that Baruch should write over again from his mouth the same words, and many others of the same import; *verses* 27, 32.

20 *Q.* What did Jeremiah prophesy concerning Jehoahaz the son of Josiah king of Judah, who is here called Shallum?

A. That he should die a captive in the land of Egypt; *Jer.* xxii. 11, 12. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 31—34.

21 *Q.* What did he say concerning Jehoiakim his brother?

A. That he should die unlamented, and be buried like an ass, drawn and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem; *Jer.* xxii. 18, 20.

22 *Q.* What did he pronounce concerning Jehoiachin, who is also called Jeconiah and Coniah?

A. That he should die in a strange land, and none of his seed should sit on the throne

of Judah; *Jer.* xxii. 24—30. and he accordingly was carried to Babylon, and lived long there, and there he died; *Jer.* lii. 31.

23 *Q.* What advice did he give to Zedekiah king of Judah?

A. To submit willingly to the yoke of the king of Babylon, that both he and his people might meet with better treatment; *Jer.* xxvii. 12, 18.

24 Q. How did the false prophet Hananiah oppose Jeremiah?

A. He took the yoke from the prophet Jeremiah's neck, which probably he had worn for some years; and as he brake it, he declared, the Lord would break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar in two years from the necks of the nations; *Jer.* xxviii. 1—11.

25 *Q.* How did Jeremiah answer him?

A. That God had appointed yokes of iron instead of yokes of wood, for all the nations to serve the king of Babylon; and that Hananiah should die that year for his falsehood, which came to pass in two months after; *verses* 10—17.

26 *Q.* Among all these predictions of distress did not Jeremiah prophesy any thing comfortable to the nation of Israel?

A. Yes, he foretold the return of the Jews to their own land with joy after seventy years captivity, and he encouraged their faith and hope by many gracious promises of the Messiah who was to come; *chap.* xxv. xxix. xxx. and xxxi.

27 *Q.* How did king Zedekiah deal with Jeremiah the prophet when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem?

A. He shut him up in the court of the prison which was in the king's house, because he foretold that Jerusalem should be taken, and that Zedekiah the king should not escape, but be carried to Babylon; *Jer.* xxxii. 1—5.

28 *Q.* What did Jeremiah do in prison, to assure them that the Jews should return from captivity, and possess the cities of Judah again?

A. By express order from God, he bought a field of his cousin Hananeel, paid him the money, subscribed the evidence, and sealed it before witnesses, as an emblem and pledge of what should be done in Jerusalem hereafter; *verses* 6—16, 44.

29 *Q.* What did Jeremiah do when he was at liberty?

A. He endeavoured to flee out of Jerusalem, but he was seized by the guard upon suspicion of falling away to the Chaldeans, and he was thrust down into a dungeon by the princes, because he prophesied the destruction of the city; *chap.* xxxvii. 11—16. and xxxviii. 1—6.

30 *Q.* What relief did the prophet find here?

A. When he sunk in the mire, Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, a servant in the king's house, drew him up with ropes, by leave from the king, and he remained in the court of the prison till the city was taken; *verses* 7—14.

31 *Q.* What favour did God shew to Ebedmelech on this account?

A. He assured him he should not die by the sword, but his life should be given him, because he trusted in the Lord; *Jer.* xxxix. 16.

32 *Q.* When Zedekiah the king sent for Jeremiah, what message had he from God?

A. He repeated his advice to the king of Judah, to go forth and submit to the king of Babylon, in order to save himself and the city; *verses* 17, 18.

33 *Q.* Did the king hearken to his advice?

A. No; he did not obey the prophet; so the city was taken, and burned, the princes

of Judah were slain, and the king's sons were put to death before his eyes: Then the king had his eyes put out, and he was carried in chains to Babylon, and died there; *Jer.* xxxix. 1—10. and lii. 8—11.

Note, Then was fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Zedekiah; *Ezek.* xii. 13. "I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there."

34 *Q.* What became of Jeremiah after the city was taken?

A. Nebuchadnezzar gave order to the officers of his army to take care of him; and to give him his liberty to go where he pleased; *Jer.* xxxix. 11. and xl. 4, 5.

35 *Q.* Whither did Jeremiah choose to go?

A. He chose to continue in the land of Israel, and put himself under the protection of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land; *verses* 6, 7.

36 *Q.* Did Jeremiah continue under his protection?

A. Gedaliah was quickly slain by a faction raised by Ishmael, and Ishmael also was put to flight by another faction under the command of Johanan; *Jer.* xl. xli.

37 *Q.* What did Johanan do with Jeremiah?

A. He carried him and a multitude of the people into Egypt, in direct opposition to the advice which Jeremiah gave him from the Lord; *chap.* xlii. and xliii.

38 *Q.* What did Jeremiah do in the land of Egypt?

A. He severely reproved the Jews for their idolatry there, he denounced ruin upon them; he took great stones and hid them in the clay at the entrance of Pharaoh the king of Egypt's palace, and foretold, that Nebuchadnezzar should conquer Egypt, and should set his throne upon those stones; *Jer.* xliii. 9, 10.

39 *Q.* Among the several prophecies against the nations round about did not Jeremiah foretel the destruction of Babylon?

A. Yes, he pronounced the severe judgments of God against Babylon who had plundered Jerusalem, in a notable and dreadful manner, as Isaiah did before him; all which were eminently fulfilled, partly when Cyrus the Persian took the city of Babylon, and partly in following times; *Jer.* l. and li.

40 *Q.* What emblem or pledge did Jeremiah give of the accomplishment of this prophecy?

A. He wrote in a book all these threatenings, and bid Seraiah, one of the jewish captives, read it when he came to Babylon, then bind a stone to it, and cast it into the river Euphrates, and say, "Thus shall Babylon sink and shall never rise again;" *Jer.* li. 59—64.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HISTORY OF DANIEL.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Daniel?

Answer. A young man of the tribe of Judah, who was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah; *Dan.* i. 1—6.

2 *Q.* How was he disposed of in Babylon?

A. Daniel and his fellows, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were appointed to be nourished by the king's provision, and to be trained up in the learning of the Chaldeans, that in three years time they might stand before the king; *verses* 5, 6.

3 *Q.* And did they, being Jews, eat of the king's provision which was prepared after the manner of the heathens?

A. No; they chose to be fed with pulse and water, rather than defile themselves with the king's meat; *verses* 8—14.

4 *Q.* How did they thrive by it?

A. Their countenances appeared fairer, and their aspect was better approved by Melzar who took care of them, than the rest who fed on royal dainties? *verse* 15.

5 *Q.* How did they approve themselves when they were called before the king?

A. The king found them far wiser and better than all the astrologers and magicians in his kingdom; *verse* 20.

6 *Q.* What was the first special occasion of Daniel's advancement at court?

A. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream which much troubled him, yet he forgot it in the morning; and sent orders to destroy all the wise men and astrologers, because they could not tell him both the dream and the interpretation thereof; *Dan.* ii. 1—13.

7 *Q.* How did Daniel obtain this secret from God?

A. He engaged himself and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in prayer to the God of heaven; that he would reveal this secret to them, that they might not all perish together with the astrologers, whom the king had doomed to death; *Dan.* ii. 16—18.

8 *Q.* What was this dream which Daniel rehearsed before the king?

A. There appeared a bright and terrible image, whose head was gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay, which was dashed to pieces by a stone, and the stone became a mountain, and filled the whole earth; *verses* 31—35.

9 *Q.* What was the interpretation of it?

A. It signifies the four great monarchies of the world; *viz.* the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, which should destroy one another in succession, and the last of them should be destroyed by the kingdom of Christ, which should spread through the earth and remain for ever; *verses* 31—45.

10 *Q.* What honours did Nebuchadnezzar bestow on Daniel on this occasion?

A. He acknowledged the supremacy of the God of Daniel, he made Daniel ruler over Babylon, and at his request made Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego officers under him; *verses* 46—49.

11 *Q.* What became of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

A. Notwithstanding the honour the king had given them, yet they were cast into a fiery furnace, because they would not worship a huge golden image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up; *Dan.* v. 1—21.

12 *Q.* What remarkable providence attended their being cast into the furnace?

A. The king being enraged at them for refusing boldly to worship this image, commanded the furnace to be made seven times hotter, even to such a degree, that the flame slew the men that cast them into it; *verse* 22.

13 *Q.* How were they saved in the fiery furnace?

A. Though these three men were cast into the furnace bound, and fell down in the fire,

yet presently afterward the king saw four men loose walking in the fire, and they had no hurt; and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God; *verses* 23—25. That is, some glorious person whom Nebuchadnezzar could not better describe than as a heavenly being, a Son of God.

14 *Q.* What influence had this upon the king?

A. He called them to come out of the furnace, and blessed their God who had sent his angel to deliver them, and made a decree, that no man should speak against the God of the Jews; *verses* 26—28.

15 *Q.* What other dream of Nebuchadnezzar's did Daniel interpret?

A. The dream of a tall and spreading tree that was cut down, and the stump of it was left in the earth, and that should have a beast's heart given it instead of a man's for seven years; *Dan.* iv. 1—16.

16 *Q.* What interpretation did Daniel give to it?

A. That Nebuchadnezzar the king should be driven from his kingdom, should run mad, and dwell seven years with the beasts of the earth, and then be restored to his reason and his kingdom again; *verses* 19—27.

17 *Q.* How soon was this fulfilled?

A. At the end of twelve months he was walking in the palace of Babylon, and boasting of his grandeur and majesty, and there fell a voice from heaven, that his kingdom was departed, and he should be driven from men: And immediately he was seized with madness, and the sentence was executed upon him, and he fled from the society of men, and herded with the beasts in the open field; *verses* 28—33.

18 *Q.* What did Nebuchadnezzar do at seven years end, when his understanding and his kingdom were restored to him?

A. He did further honours to the God of heaven, and published this history of himself, and these signs and wonders of the great God, throughout all his dominions; *verses* 1—3.

19 *Q.* What notice was taken of Daniel in the time of Belshazzar the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar?

A. He was sent for to court to read and interpret three or four words, which were written upon the wall by the apparition of a hand while Belshazzar was feasting; *Dan.* v. 5—16.

20 *Q.* What was there in Belshazzar's feast that eminently provoked God against him?

A. He and his nobles drank in the holy vessels that were taken out of the temple of God at Jerusalem, and at the same time they praised their gods of gold and silver, of wood and stone; *Dan.* v. 1—4.

21 *Q.* What was the meaning of this writing against the wall?

A. That God had finished Belshazzar's kingdom, and given it to the Medes and Persians; *verses* 25—28.

22 *Q.* What honour was done to Daniel?

A. He was immediately clothed in scarlet, with a chain of gold, and made the third ruler in the kingdom; *verse* 29.

23 *Q.* When was this sentence executed on Belshazzar?

A. He was slain that very night, by the army under the command of Cyrus the

general, who after a long siege took the city Babylon, and the kingdom was translated to Darius the Mede, the emperor of the Medes and Persians; *verses* 30, 31.

24 *Q.* Did Daniel lose his preferment by the change of the kingdom?

A. No; for Darius set Daniel over all the hundred and twenty princes, and made him first of the three presidents; *Dan.* vi. 1—3.

25 *Q.* How did the envy of the presidents and princes persecute him on this occasion?

A. They knew that Daniel would pray to his God, and they persuaded king Darius to sign a decree, that if any man should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days besides of the king himself, he should be cast into the lions den; *verses* 4—9.

26 *Q.* What did Daniel do when he heard of this decree?

A. He went to his house, and the windows being open toward Jerusalem, he prayed to his God three times a day, according to his custom; *verse* 10.

27 *Q.* What was the consequence of this?

A. Though the king himself was sorry for his decree, and tried all means to save Daniel, yet his enemies prevailed to have him cast into the den of lions, because the laws of the Medes and Persians were not to be altered; *verses* 11—17.

28 *Q.* Wherein did the king further shew his concern for Daniel?

A. He passed the night without music or sleep, he went early to the lions den in the morning, and found Daniel safe to his great joy; for God had shut the mouths of the lions, that they did him no hurt; *verses* 18—23.

29 *Q.* Wherein did king Darius manifest his resentment against the enemies of Daniel?

A. He cast them with their wives and children into the den of lions, who broke all their bones immediately; *verse* 24.

30 *Q.* What special regard did Darius shew to the true God on this occasion?

A. He sent a decree through all nations, that men should fear the God of Daniel; *verse* 25.

31 *Q.* What are the other most remarkable things in the history of Daniel?

A. The visions which he saw, the excellent prayer which he made for the restoration of the Jews from captivity, and the other prophecies which were given him by angels.

32 *Q.* What were some of his visions and prophecies?

A. Emblems and representations of the four monarchies of the world, and of the kingdom of Christ; and predictions concerning future events among the Jews, and other nations of the earth; some of which are expressed so plainly, that the enemies of the Bible suppose them to be written after those events came to pass; *chap.* vii. and viii. and xi.

33 *Q.* What remarkable answer did Daniel receive to this excellent prayer of his, for the restoration of the Jews?

A. The angel Gabriel was ordered to fly swiftly, and to inform him of his own acceptance with God, of the commandment of the kings of Persia to rebuild the holy city, of the time of the coming and the death of the Messiah, to take away the sins of men, and of the second destruction of Jerusalem; *Dan.* ix. 20—27.

34 *Q.* What other eminent prophecies did Daniel receive by his converse with angels?

A. Besides the various events relating to this world, he had some predictions concerning the christian church, and its troubles, and the period of them; concerning the resurrection of the dead, everlasting life, and everlasting punishment; *chap.* xii. 1—13.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HISTORY OF ESTHER.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Esther?

Answer. A beautiful young jewish virgin, whose ancestors were carried captive by the king of Babylon, in the days of Jeconiah king of Judah; *Esther* ii. 5, 6.

2 *Q.* Where was she educated?

A. She was brought up in Shushan, the palace of the king of Persia, by Mordecai her first cousin, for her father and mother were dead; *verse* 7.

3 *Q.* To what honour was she advanced?

A. King Ahasuerus took her into his royal house, and made her queen in the room of his former queen Vashti; *verses* 16, 17.

Note, This Ahasuerus is supposed by Dr. Prideaux, and that with great probability, to be that second Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who was called Longimanus, and who, perhaps, being influenced by Esther and Mordecai, gave a decree for Ezra to promote the building of the temple at Jerusalem, after the captivity in Babylon; See *chap.* xiii. questions 9 and 13.

4 *Q.* What was the occasion of Vashti's disgrace?

A. When the king had made a most magnificent feast for all his nobles and princes, he sent for Vashti, to shew the princes her beauty, and to grace the festival, but she refused to come; *Esther* i. 10—12.

5 *Q.* What service did Mordecai do for the king, which laid a foundation for his future advancement?

A. He gave information against two of the chamberlains who had conspired against the king, upon which they were tried and hanged; *Esther* ii. 21—23.

6 *Q.* Who was made the king's chief favourite a little after this time?

A. Haman of the seed of Agag the Amalekite; *Esther* iii. 1, 2.

7 *Q.* Wherein did Mordecai offend Haman?

A. He refused to bow before him, and do reverence to him, as the king's servants did at court; *verse* 2.

8 *Q.* How did Haman attempt to revenge himself?

A. By persuading the king to send orders to destroy all the Jews that were in all his dominions; *verses* 6—15.

9 *Q.* What did Mordecai do on this occasion?

A. He desired Esther the queen to venture into the king's presence, though she were not called, in order to petition the king for the lives of her people the Jews; *Esther* iv. 4—9.

10 *Q.* Did Esther comply with his request?

A. Though she knew it was death by the law to venture into the king's presence, unless he held out his golden sceptre to her, yet having first fasted and prayed to God three

days, and appointed the Jews in Shushan to fast and pray, she ventured to approach the king; *Esther* v. 1.

11 *Q.* What success did queen Esther find?

A. The king held out his golden sceptre to her, and promised to grant her request, even to the half of his kingdom; *Esther* v. 1—3.

12 *Q.* What was Esther's first request to the king?

A. That the king and Haman would come to a banquet which the queen had prepared for them; which request also she repeated the next day; *Esther* v. 3—8.

13 *Q.* How was Haman employed on that day?

A. He rejoiced at the invitation that Esther gave him, and set up a gallows for Mordecai fifty cubits high, expecting that at his desire the king would order Mordecai to be hanged thereon; *verses* 9—14.

14 *Q.* How did the king pass the time that night?

A. He could not sleep, and he had the book of records read to entertain him, wherein was written Mordecai's information of the conspiracy against the king; *Esther* vi. 1, 2.

15 *Q.* What effect had this on the king?

A. When he enquired and found that Mordecai had received no recompence for his faithfulness, he ordered Haman to array him in royal apparel, to set him on the king's own horse, and do the highest honours to him in a public procession through the city; *verses* 6—11.

16 *Q.* In what remarkable hour did Haman receive this order from the king?

A. At that very time when he was come to court to speak to the king, to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had set up; *verses* 4, 5.

17 *Q.* When the king and Haman were come to the banquet, what was queen Esther's further request?

A. That the nation of the Jews, which were her kindred, might be delivered from the general massacre that Haman had contrived for them; *Esther* vii. 1—7.

18 *Q.* What change of affairs ensued on this petition to the king?

A. The king commanded Haman to be hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, he put Mordecai into Haman's place at court, and sent orders throughout his dominions for the Jews to defend themselves; *Esther* vii. 9, 10. and viii. 1—17.

19 *Q.* Why was not the order for the slaughter of the Jews rather reversed?

A. Because what is written in the king's name, and sealed with his ring, could not be reversed according to the laws of the government; *verse* 8. and God ordered it thus in his providence for the public destruction of their enemies.

20 *Q.* How did the Jews defend themselves in the day designed for their general slaughter?

A. They slew seventy-five thousand of those that rose up against them, and the ten sons of Haman among the rest; *Esther* ix. 1—16.

21 *Q.* What memorial of this great deliverance was preserved amongst the Jews?

A. All the Jews agreed, by and with the authority of Esther and Mordecai, to keep the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the month Adar, every year, as a day of thanksgiving for this salvation; *verses* 20—32.

22 *Q.* What was the name of this festival?

A. These two days were called the days of purim, from pur, which signifies a lot, because Haman had cast lots in a superstitious manner, to find out what month or day

was the most lucky to execute his bloody device against the Jews; *Esther* ix. 26, 27. and iii. 7.

23 *Q.* How does this history appear to be a true account of things, since there is not the least hint who was the writer of it, nor is the name of God in it?

A. Because it is delivered down to us among the sacred writings by the Jews themselves, who were the keepers of the oracles of God; *Rom.* iii. 2. and because this feast of purim is observed by the Jews to this day, in memory of this deliverance.

The end of the Histories of the Old Testament.

CHAPTER XIX.

A CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH OF THE JEWS, FROM THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THE TIMES OF CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION.

THE learned Dr. Prideaux hath written two large and valuable volumes, which he calls "The Connection of the History of the Old and New Testament;" where he gives us an account of all the most credible things that he can find in ancient historians, relating to the Jews and their customs, as well as their history, during that period of time between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New; he intermingles also a large collection of historical matters relating to Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and all the more known and remarkable nations of the earth, wherein the great affairs of the four monarchies of the world were transacted. This renders his work a little too tedious to those who expected nothing more than a mere continuation of the jewish history to the times of our Saviour.

Now it is only a very brief abstract of the history of the Jews which I endeavour here to set before the reader, that he may gain a little acquaintance with the affairs of the Jews, or the church of God from the days of Nehemiah, when scripture history ends, to the beginning of the gospel, and the times of Christ. A great part of it must be taken originally from Josephus, the jewish historian, and from the books of Maccabees, which I have consulted on this occasion; but I have borrowed much further light and assistance from Dr. Prideaux in this matter, whose laborious collection from heathen writings, and his judicious determination in many dubious points, have rendered his work more complete and accurate, and mine more easy.

SECTION I.

OF NEHEMIAH'S FURTHER REFORMATION, SYNAGOGUES, TARGUMS, SAMARITANS, PROSELYTES, &c.

Note, this Chapter being so long, the Questions of each Section shall be numbered apart.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT further reformation did Nehemiah make in Israel?

Answer. It is reported by the Jews, that he himself, together with Ezra the scribe,

having found a great want of the knowledge of the law among the people, did, about this time, appoint the reading of the law in the several towns and cities: And on this occasion, it is supposed, that synagogues began to be built throughout the land, or at least to be restored and renewed, if there had been any built before.

2 *Q.* Where were these synagogues to be built?

A. According to the account which the Jews have given us, they might be built in any town wheresoever they could find ten persons of full age, and of such condition and easy circumstances of life, as to be always at leisure to attend the service.

3 *Q.* What was the service performed in the synagogues?

A. Prayers and praises to God, reading the holy scriptures, and preaching and expounding them.

4 *Q.* In what manner were the scriptures expounded?

A. The Jews and their posterity having lost much of their own language in Babylon, did not so well understand the scriptures in the Hebrew tongue: And therefore when Ezra read the law to the people, the sense was given to them in Chaldee by many levites who stood by, and caused them to understand the reading; *Nehem.* viii. 4—8. And this manner of reading the scripture, verse by verse, and translating it into the Chaldee, with some little paraphrase upon it, was the manner of expounding used in the ancient synagogues.

Note 1. This was the original of the jewish targums, which word in Chaldee signifies an interpretation: For when synagogues were multiplied among the Jews, beyond the number of able interpreters, it became necessary that such translations of the Hebrew into Chaldee should be made for the use of the teachers and the people; and that in private families also, as well as in synagogues. There were anciently many of these targums, or translations, or expositions, and that upon different parts of scripture, and of different sorts, as there were also many different versions of the scripture into Greek, in following ages, for the same purposes. Several of these targums are lost, through length of time; but the chief of those which remain to this day, is the targum or Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos, upon the law of Moses; and the targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel upon the prophets; both which some learned men suppose to be written before Christ, and are, by the Jews, valued as equal to the Hebrew text. As for the Jerusalem targum, it is an exposition upon the law, and others are on different parts of scripture; but they are all of less esteem, and of much later date: But neither the one nor the other of the targums were much known to the primitive christian writers, though these expositions greatly favour the christian cause.

2. Among the Jews, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, &c. are sometimes called the former prophets; and the book of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets, are called the latter prophets; but they are all called the prophets: Thus the law and the prophets make up the whole Bible.

3. That there are in Daniel two hundred verses of the Bible written originally in Chaldee, and sixty-seven in Ezra, and one verse in Jeremiah, *viz.* chapters x. and xi. And some suppose, for this reason, there is no targum on Daniel and Ezra; neither, indeed, is there on Nehemiah, though that book be called Hebrew.

5 *Q.* What were the times appointed for this service in the synagogue?

A. Two days in the week, besides the sabbath, and their other festivals: The law being divided into so many sections or lessons as there are weeks in their year, they read

half a lesson on Monday morning, and the other half on Thursday morning; and this same whole lesson they read on the sabbath, both morning and afternoon; *Acts* xv. 21. We are told that reading the law was a custom of ancient times on the sabbath; and when reading of the prophets was added to that of the law, they observed the same order in it.

6 *Q.* What were their hours of the daily prayer?

A. At the time of morning and evening sacrifice and incense; *Luke* i. 9, 10. *Acts* iii. 1. "While Zacharias was offering incense, the people were praying in the court: And Peter and John went up to pray in the temple at this time." To these hours they conformed their prayers in the temple, and in their synagogues, and usually too in their own houses.

Note, The Jews supposed that the offering up of the daily sacrifices, and the burning of incense at the same time, were designed to render God propitious to them, and make their prayers acceptable; and for this reason they conformed their times of prayer to these hours. So David prays; *Psalm* cxli. 2. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense," &c. And *Rev.* viii. 4, 5. "And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hands."

7 *Q.* Had they any other season of prayer besides these two?

A. The Jews inform us, that besides these they had a prayer at the beginning of night, while the evening sacrifice was left burning on the altar. Thus, by their three prayers in a day, they imitated the ancients. David prayed morning, noon, and evening; *Psalm* lvii. 17. Daniel prayed three times a day; *Dan.* vi. 10.

8 *Q.* Who ministered in the service of the synagogue?

A. The priests and levites were consecrated to the service of the temple, but for the services of the synagogue, persons of any tribe were appointed by some elders of that town, who were called rulers of the synagogue. So our Saviour, being of the tribe of Judah, read and expounded in the synagogue; *Luke* iv. 16. So after the reading the law and the prophets, Paul and Silas were engaged in preaching, when the master of the synagogue asked them for a word of exhortation for the people; *Acts* xiii. 15.

9 *Q.* But were there not other places of prayer distinct from the synagogues?

A. The synagogues were sometimes called prayer-houses, yet there were prayer-houses called proseuchai, which differed from synagogues in three respects. 1. Synagogues were built for public worship, but these places of prayer for any one's private devotions occasionally. 2. Synagogues were covered houses, but the places of prayer were courts or inclosures with walls, and open to the sky. 3. Synagogues were chiefly in towns or cities, the prayer-houses in open fields, or on mountains: Such are mentioned where our Saviour spent a whole night in the prayer-house, as it should be translated; *Luke* vi. 12. and thither pious persons resorted, and prayer was wont to be made; *Acts* xvi. 13, 16.

10 *Q.* Is there any certainty that there were any synagogues before this time?

A. That there were some places of assembly for divine things in the land of Israel, before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, seems pretty plain from *Psalm* lxxiv. 7, 8. "They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land." Though they might be but very few, and not established by any authority, nor so constantly attended as afterward. And yet, considering that the Jews fell so frequently into idolatry before, and had so few copies of the law, it is questioned by some

learned men, whether there were any such synagogues at all in the land of Israel till after the Babylonish captivity.

11 *Q.* What eminent and remarkable service was done by these public places of worship?

A. It is supposed that frequent public readings of the law in the synagogues, after that time, were a special means to excite and preserve in the people of the Jews, that universal and perpetual hatred of idolatry, to which they were so shamefully prone before; and it did also diffuse and maintain the knowledge of true religion and virtue in the land.

12 *Q.* Were these synagogues built any where besides in Judea?

A. When the Jews were afterwards scattered abroad into various nations, they built places of worship for themselves wheresoever the rulers of the country would permit them.

13 *Q.* Of what advantage were these synagogues to the heathens, or afterward to christianity?

A. It was by means of these synagogues that the heathens, where the Jews were dispersed, came to know the true God, and some general principles of virtue and piety, and became proselytes of the gate; and by these public places and seasons of worship, there was afterwards an opportunity given to publish the gospel of Christ by the apostles, both among the Jews and gentiles; *Acts* xvii. 1, 2. and xix. 8.

14 *Q.* What is meant by proselytes of the gate?

A. Those gentiles who renounced idolatry, and received the knowledge and the worship of the one true God, the God of Israel; and, as some affirm, they received also the rules of abstaining from blood, and things strangled, and things offered to idols, which were forbidden, *Acts* xv. 20, 29. to the gentile converts to christianity.

Note, These rules, with a few others, have been usually called the seven precepts of Noah, which the Jews make as necessary for all the world to obey, as the law of Moses was for them: And doubtless, the laws given to Noah, were given to all the world, because all sprang from him.

15 *Q.* Why were they called proselytes of the gate?

A. The word proselyte signifies one that embraces a new religion; and they were called proselytes of the gate, because they were suffered to live within the gates of the Jews, according to the expression in the fourth commandment, The stranger which is within thy gates. They were also permitted by the Jews to enter the outer court of the temple, called the court of the gentiles, when that was built, and to worship God there; but they were excluded from the gate of the inner court.

Note, These are they who in the book of the Acts of the Apostles are supposed by some to be called the devout persons, and those who feared God, &c. *Acts* x. 17. and xiii. 50. and xvii. 4. and xiii. 16. Among these was the chief harvest of the first christian converts; though there might be many persons too, who worshipped the one true God, who were under no proselytism to the jewish church.

16 *Q.* What were the other sort of proselytes?

A. They were such gentiles as consented to be circumcised, and obliged themselves to practise all the law of Moses; *Gal.* v. 3. therefore they were called proselytes of righteousness: They were taken into the jewish nation, and united with them; and were also

called proselytes of the temple, because they were admitted by the Jews into the inner courts.

Note, This distinction of proselytes has been supported by the common opinion for near two hundred years; but since it is said to have no better foundation than the Babylonish talmud, it is doubted by some learned men, whether there were any proselytes, either under the Old Testament or New Testament, besides those who were circumcised and complete.

17 *Q.* Having heard this particular account of synagogues and proselytes, proceed now to say what was the last act of Nehemiah's reformation which we read in scripture?

A. That he turned out Manasseh, the son or grandson of the high-priest, for marrying the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite; *Nehem.* xiii. 28.

18 *Q.* What did Sanballat do with his son-in-law, Manasseh, on this occasion?

A. He procured a grant from Darius Nothus, who was now king of Persia, to build on mount Gerizim, near Samaria, a temple like that at Jerusalem, and to make Manasseh, his son-in-law, the high-priest of it.

19 *Q.* What was the consequence of this practice?

A. Samaria thenceforth became the refuge of the rebellious Jews, who were called to account for breaking the sabbath, eating unclean meats, or were found guilty in sinning against the law in any remarkable instances.

20 *Q.* What change was wrought hereby among the Samaritans?

A. Their first original was from some eastern heathens who were planted there by the king of Assyria, after the captivity of Israel; but when, on several occasions, the Jews flocked to them, it made a considerable change in their religion; for though, before they worshipped the God of Israel, in conjunction with other gods, 2 *Kings* xvii. 24—41. they now cast off their idolatry: And since a temple was built amongst them, in which the jewish service was performed, and the law of Moses read publicly, they came much nearer to the worship of the true God, prescribed in scripture.

21 *Q.* Did not the Jews love them the better on this account?

A. No, by no means; but they hated them grievously: The enmity which began from the opposition which they the Samaritans made to the Jews in their rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple, was so exceedingly increased by their sheltering all the rebellious Jews, that the Jews at Jerusalem published the bitterest curse against them that ever was denounced against any people.

22 *Q.* What miseries were contained in this curse?

A. The Jews forbid all communication with the Samaritans, declared all the fruits of their land, and their cattle unclean; excluded them from being ever received as proselytes, and barred them, as far as possible, from having any portion in the resurrection of the dead to eternal life.

23 *Q.* What appearance of this great enmity do we find in the New Testament?

A. This seems to be confirmed by the words of scripture; *John* iv. 9. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans:" And the woman of Samaria asked our Saviour, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a woman of Samaria?" And when the Jews would give the worst name they could to our Saviour, they said, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil;" *John* viii. 48.

SECTION II.

OF THE JEWISH AFFAIRS UNDER THE PERSIAN AND GRECIAN MONARCHIES.

1 QUESTION.

How were the Jews governed after the death of Nehemiah?

Answer. We find not any more particular governors of Judea made by the kings or emperors of Persia; but Judea seems to be made subject to those whom the Persian kings made governors of Syria; and that under them the regulation of affairs was committed to the high-priest; so that he had all the sacred authority, and the civil power also, in a good measure, under the Syrian governor.

2 *Q.* Did the high-priests continue their regular succession as the eldest of Aaron's family?

A. This succession was sometimes interrupted by the emperors of the world, or their deputed governors of the provinces, appointing another person to take that office.

3 *Q.* What is the first remarkable instance of that kind?

A. When Johanan, or Jonathan, the son of Joiada; *Nehem.* xii. 11. had possessed the royal priesthood several years, Bagoses, the governor of Syria, appointed his younger brother Jeshua to depose him, and take the priesthood; upon which there was a tumult in the inner court of the temple, and Johanan slew Jeshua there.

4 *Q.* How did Bagoses, the governor, resent this?

A. He entered into the inner court of the temple, though the Jews forbid him, as being unclean; but he told them he was purer than the dead carcase of him whom they had slain there; and imposed on the priests a fine of about thirty-one shillings for every lamb that was offered throughout the year.

5 *Q.* What was the next more famous difficulty and deliverance which the Jews met with?

A. They were most remarkably saved from the oppression and resentment of Alexander the Great, who was king of Macedonia in Greece, when they had refused to assist him in the siege of Tyrus.

6 *Q.* In what manner were they delivered?

A. When Alexander marched against Jerusalem, designing to punish the Jews on this account, Jaddua the high-priest, the son of Johanan, being directed by a night vision, met the conqueror in his priestly robes, with the other priests attending him in proper habits, and all the people in white garments: Alexander being struck with this sight, saluted the high-priest with a religious veneration, embraced him, entered Jerusalem in a friendly manner, and offered sacrifice to God in the temple for his late victories.

7 *Q.* How came Alexander so suddenly to change his purpose, and behave himself with so much mildness?

A. Alexander declared that he himself, in Macedonia, had seen this very same person, thus habited, in a night vision, encouraging him to pursue his expedition against the Persians, and promising him success.

8 *Q.* What further favours did Alexander shew the Jews?

A. When Jaddua, the high-priest, had shewn him the prophecies of Daniel; parti-

cularly *chap.* viii. 21. where the he-goat is interpreted to be the king of Grecia, who should conquer the Medes and Persians, and *chap.* xi. 3. he bid the Jews ask what they had to desire of him: And, according to their request, he granted them the liberty of their own laws and religion, and a freedom from tribute or taxes every seventh year, because then they neither sowed nor reaped.

9 *Q.* Did Alexander succeed in his following wars, and his attempts against the Persian empire, according to the jewish prophecy?

A. When he departed out of Judea and Palestine, he marched into Egypt, which speedily submitted to him: There he built the city Alexandria, and peopled it with several nations, among whom were many Jews, to whom he gave the same privileges as to his own Macedonians. The next spring he hastened to find out Darius Codomannus, king of Persia, whom he had routed once before, and he now vanquished him in a final decisive battle near Arbela, and became master of the Persian empire.

10 *Q.* How long did he reign after this battle?

A. He went on and conquered India; but in five years time he fell into such a riot and drunkenness that put an end to his life; though others say he was poisoned.

11 *Q.* What became of the Jews after Alexander's death?

A. A little after the death of Alexander, four of his generals divided his empire, who were the four horns of the he-goat mentioned by the prophet Daniel, which grew up after breaking of the first horn; *Dan.* viii. 22. and xi. 4. And the Jews fell under the dominion of Ptolemy, afterwards surnamed Soter, who had Egypt, Arabia, Cœle-Syria, and Palestine, or the land of Israel, for his share.

Here it may be observed, that as Ptolemy had Egypt, Palestine, &c. for his share, so Cassander had Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus had Thrace and Bithynia, and some other provinces thereabout; Seleucus had Syria, and the northern and eastern provinces in Asia. Thus was the empire of Alexander the Great divided among his generals.

SECTION III.

OF THE JEWISH AFFAIRS UNDER PTOLEMY SOTER, PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS, AND PTOLEMY PHILOPATOR, KINGS OF EGYPT. OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE, THE JEWISH TRADITIONS, THEIR MISHNAH AND TALMUD; AND OF THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO GREEK.

1 QUESTION.

How did Ptolemy, king of Egypt, deal with the Jews?

Answer. Ptolemy designing to make Alexandria, which was built by Alexander, in Egypt, his capital city; he persuaded a multitude of Jews to settle there, granting them the same privileges as Alexander had done before him: Whence it came to pass, that Alexandria had a great number of Jews still flocking to it.

2 *Q.* What remarkable story is related of one Mosollam, a Jew, who followed Ptolemy about this time?

A. When a certain soothsayer, or cunning man, advised a jewish troop of horse, in which Mosollam rode, to stand still, upon the sight of a bird in the way, and told them, they should either go backward or forward as that bird took its flight; the Jew, being a

great archer, immediately shot the bird with an arrow, and said, "How could that poor wretched bird foreshew us our fortune, which knew nothing of its own?" Hereby he designed to expose and condemn the superstition of the heathens.

3 *Q.* How did it fare with the Jews that were dispersed about Babylon?

A. Seleucus, another of Alexander's generals, who ruled in the greater and the lesser Asia, built many cities; sixteen of which he called Antioch, from Antiochus, his father; nine were called Seleucia, from his own name; six Laodicea, from the name Laodice, his mother; others Apamea and Stratonice, from his wives: In all which he planted Jews, and gave them equal privileges with the Greeks or Macedonians, especially at Antioch, in Syria, where they settled in great numbers.

4 *Q.* What considerable person arose among the Jews at Jerusalem about this time?

A. Simon the Just, who is spoken of so honourably in the fiftieth of *Ecclesiasticus:* He was a high-priest of the Jews about this time, who merited the surname of the Just, by his great holiness toward God, and justice toward men; and he was the last of the men of the great synagogue.

5 *Q.* What was this great synagogue, and who were the men that composed it?

A. A hundred and twenty elders, who, in a continued succession, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, laboured in restoring the jewish church and state; and made it their chief care to publish the scriptures to the people with great accuracy.

6 *Q.* What part of this work is attributed to Simon?

A. It is supposed, by some learned men, that he added the two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the prophecy of Malachi, to the canon of scripture; which books were scarce supposed to be inserted by Ezra, because several of them are thought to be written by Ezra himself; and the books of Nehemiah and Malachi were most likely written after Ezra's time.

7 *Q.* Did the Jews after this time, when the Old Testament was completed, religiously confine themselves to the directions of scripture?

A. After this time their traditions began to prevail; that is, the sayings of the ancients delivered down by tradition.

Note, Though traditions prevailed about this time, yet the mishnah, which is their secondary law, or a collection of traditions, and which they pretend to be dictated from God to Moses, was not compiled and put together till above a hundred years after the time of Christ, by Rabbi Judah Hakkadesh: And this mishnah, together with their comments on these things, are called the talmud.

Note, There are two talmuds; that of Jerusalem, which was complete about three hundred years after Christ; and that of Babylon about five hundred years: But each of them have the same mishnah, though with different comments, which comments are called the gemara.

8 *Q.* Who were the chief teachers of this secondary law or traditions?

A. Antigonus of Socho was the first of them, who being an eminent scribe in the law of God, was president of the sanhedrim, or senate of the elders at Jerusalem, great master of the jewish school, and a teacher of righteousness to the people, and of these traditions. Afterward all the teachers or doctors of the Jewish law were, in the New Testament, sometimes called scribes, sometimes lawyers, or those who sat in Moses's seat.

9 *Q.* What special honour was paid to these men?

A. Besides other respects shewed them by the people, who called them Rabbi, and highly esteemed them, it was out of these doctors that the great sanhedrim, or council of seventy-two, was chosen to govern the whole nation; and the lesser council, of twenty-three, which was in every city of Judea.

Note, These were called rulers, or elders, or counsellors; such were Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel.

Note here also, That in the jewish talmudical books, or their fabulous writings, on which we cannot much depend, we are told, that about this time one Sadoc mistook the doctrine of Antigonus of Socho, his master, who taught, that "we ought not to serve God in a servile manner, merely with respect to the reward:" And inferred from hence, that there were no rewards after this life, and begun the sect of the Sadducees; though it may be justly doubted whether this, and other dangerous doctrines of this sect, arose so early among the Jews.

10 *Q.* Since the Jews were dispersed into so many countries, did they not acquaint the gentiles with their religion?

A. Yes; for Ptolemy Soter set up a college of learned men at Alexandria, in Egypt, and began a library there; which Ptolemy Philadelphus, his youngest son and successor, improved to one hundred thousand volumes: This prince is reported to have commanded the Hebrew law to be translated into Greek, to add to this library of his, that the gentiles might read it, and accordingly it was done.

Note, This college of learned men was encouraged, and the library increased by several Ptolemies successively, till it arose to seven hundred thousand books; both these things made Alexandria a famous place of residence and resort for learned men for several ages. It happened that the larger half of this library was burned by Julius Cæsar in his Alexandrian war. The other part was by continual recruits enlarged to a vaster number than the whole library before; but it was finally burned and destroyed by the Saracens in the year of our Lord 642.

11 *Q.* In what manner is this translation reported to be made?

A. Aristeas, the most ancient writer on this subject, and Josephus the historian, who follows him, acquaint us, that after this, Ptolemy had gained the favour of the Jews, by paying the ransom of a hundred thousand of their countrymen, who were enslaved in Egypt, he procured six elders out of every tribe of Israel, which were in all seventy-two, to come to his court? and after a trial of their wisdom, by some particular question being put to each of them, he appointed them to translate the law of Moses, by conferring together about the sense of it in the isle of Pharos: Which being afterwards read to him, and approved by him, he gave them a liberal reward. Upon this account, this translation is called the Septuagint, that is, the translation of the seventy, or seventy-two elders.

12 *Q.* But did not this story in following times grow much more fabulous?

A. Philo the Jew, who lived about our Saviour's time, reports, that each of these seventy-two elders were put into a distinct cell, and were required to translate the whole Bible apart; and that they performed it so exactly alike, word for word, that it was approved as miraculous and divine: And even several fathers of the christian church, being too credulous and fond of miracles, have received this story, and conveyed it down in their writings.

13 *Q.* How doth it appear to be a fable?

A. The great imperfection of this translation discovers that it was no divine work, nor performed by miracle: Besides, the several contradictions, and the uncertainties that are mingled up and down with this story, do utterly overthrow the credit of it.

14 *Q.* Upon the whole view of things, what is the best account of this translation?

A. In the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, there was such a version made of the five books of Moses by the Jews of Alexandria, into the Greek language, probably for their own use, and for the use of their countrymen: For the Jews in their dispersions had used themselves to the Greek tongue, the conquests of Alexander and his Grecian army having spread their language through the world: And when Ptolemy Philadelphus erected such a noble library, he was desirous to have this book reposited there. Whether his request or command gave any occasion to this translation is hard to determine.

15 *Q.* Were not the other sacred writings translated into Greek also, as well as the five books of Moses?

A. When the reading of the prophets as well as the law came into use in the synagogues, many years afterwards, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, this occasioned a Greek translation of the prophets to be made, and so the whole Old Testament was complete, which we now call the Septuagint.

16 *Q.* Did the Jews generally come to use this Greek translation of the Bible?

A. In and after the time of Ezra the scriptures were read to the Jews in Hebrew, and interpreted into the Chaldee language, which they had learned in Babylon, and was become most familiar to them. But at Alexandria, after the making of this Greek version, it was interpreted to them in Greek, which was afterwards done also in all other Grecian cities whither the Jews were dispersed. And from hence those Jews were called hellenists, or grecizing Jews, because they used the Greek language in their synagogues: And by that name they were distinguished from the Hebrew Jews, who used only the Hebrew and Chaldee languages in their synagogues. And this distinction we find made between them, *Acts* vi. 1. for the word which we there translate Grecians, is in the original Ἑλληνιστῶν, that is, hellenists. So Doctor Prideaux.

17 *Q.* But did not the evangelists and the apostles, who were the writers of the New Testament, pay great honour to this Greek translation?

A. Yes; they cited many scriptures of the Old Testament, according to this translation, because it was the best Greek translation they had; and it was by this time well known amongst the Jews in Judea, as well as those who were scattered round the nations.

18 *Q.* Did the Jews in Judea continue in peace under the government of the kings of Egypt?

A. The successors of the four generals of Alexander the Great, who divided the world amongst them, and particularly the kings of Egypt and Syria, being frequently engaged in wars for enlarging their kingdoms, the Jews were reduced to very great difficulties, and sometimes were at a loss what side to choose; they were in danger on both sides, and were sometimes distressed and miserably grinded between the one and the other.

19 *Q.* Did they maintain the purity of their temple and worship?

A. They were often exposed to grievous difficulties on this account. When Ptolemy Philopator of Egypt reigned over those provinces, he would offer up sacrifices to the God of Israel for his success against Antiochus the Great, the successor of Seleucus, king of

Syria; and he was not content to stay in the outer court, but he would have pressed into the sanctuary, and even the holy of holies.

20 *Q.* How was he prevented from entering?

A. The priests, and the levites, and all the people lifted up their hands to God in prayer, and when the king had passed the inner court, and was entering into the temple, he was smitten from God with such terror and confusion of mind, that he was carried out of the place half-dead.

21 *Q.* But did not Ptolemy resent this afterwards?

A. He purposed to be revenged on all the jewish nation: When he came to Alexandria he ordered them to sacrifice to his gods; and if they refused, he took away their privileges, which they had enjoyed in Egypt from the time of Alexander the Great: He ordered them to be enrolled among the common people of Egypt, and to have the mark of an ivy-leaf, the badge of his god Bacchus, impressed upon them by a hot iron, and those who refused should be made slaves, or put to death.

22 *Q.* What did the Jews of Alexandria do on this occasion?

A. A few of them forsook their God to gain the favour of their king: But many thousands stood firm to their religion; and though several of them were enrolled, and branded with the ivy-leaf against their will, yet they shewed a great abhorrence of all their countrymen that sacrificed to the gods of the king.

23 *Q.* How did Ptolemy bear with this conduct of theirs?

A. He resolved to destroy the whole nation of the Jews; and therefore, first he ordered all that lived any where in Egypt to be brought in chains to Alexandria to be slain by his elephants.

24 *Q.* And were they destroyed according to the king's appointment?

A. The elephants being made drunk with wine and frankincense, and let loose upon them, instead of falling upon the Jews, they turned all their rage upon the spectators, and destroyed great numbers of them.

25 *Q.* What influence had this upon the king?

A. He durst no longer prosecute his rage upon them, but fearing the vengeance of the God of Israel upon himself, he revoked his cruel decrees, restored their privileges, and gave leave to put to death the Jews that had abandoned their religion, and worshipped idols.

Note, This story is found in that which is called the third book of Maccabees, written by some ancient Jew under that title, because it gives an account of the persecution and deliverance of the Jews, as the first and second books of Maccabees do; though this was transacted long before the name of Maccabeus arose, and therefore it ought rather to have been called the first book than the third. It is not found among our apocryphal books, because it was never inserted in the vulgar Latin version of the Bible, but it is found in many of the manuscripts of the Greek septuagint, and particularly that of the Alexandrian manuscript in the king's library.

SECTION IV.

OF THE JEWISH AFFAIRS UNDER ANTIOCHUS THE GREAT, SELEUCUS, AND ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, KINGS OF SYRIA.

1 QUESTION.

DID the Jews afterwards at Jerusalem continue under the government of the Ptolemies who were kings of Egypt?

Answer. When Ptolemy Philopator was dead, and Ptolemy Epiphanes came to the crown, the Jews having been greatly persecuted by the Ptolemies, submitted themselves to Antiochus the Great, king of Syria; and when he came to Jerusalem in a solemn procession, they went to meet him, and received him gladly.

2 *Q.* How did Antiochus reward them?

A. He granted them many privileges, as he had done to their countrymen who were settled in Babylonia and Mesopotamia, having always found the men of that nation faithful to him.

3 *Q.* What confidence did he put in them on this account?

A. He transported several of them from Babylonia to the lesser Asia to keep his forts and garrisons, and gave them good settlements there; whence sprang a great part of the Jews that were found in that country in the apostles times.

4 *Q.* What remarkable event fell out in the days of Seleucus Philopator, son and successor to Antiochus the Great?

A. Simon a benjamite, being made governor of the temple, some differences arose between him and Onias the third, the high-priest, an excellent man, concerning some disorders in the city: And when Simon could not obtain his will, he informed Apollonius, the governor of the province under Seleucus, that great treasures were hid in the temple; whereupon Heliodorus the treasurer was sent to seize them.

5 *Q.* How did the hand of God appear against Heliodorus in his attempt to enter the temple?

A. The priests and the people made great outcries and supplications to God, upon which Heliodorus is reported to have seen a vision of a horse with a terrible rider upon him, who smote Heliodorus with his fore-feet, and two young men appeared who scourged him sorely; upon which Heliodorus fell suddenly to the ground in darkness and confusion; but being restored by the prayers of Onias, he acknowledged the power of God, and departed from the city. Read this story more at large, 2 *Mac.* chap. iii. I confess it seems to have something a little fabulous in the air of it, as also other stories in that book.

6 *Q.* How came so good a man as Onias to be turned out of the priesthood?

A. When Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded his brother Seleucus in the kingdom of Syria, Jason bribed him with a large sum of money to turn out his own brother Onias, banish him to Antioch, and confer the priesthood on himself; not that he affected it as it was a religious office, but as it included the power of civil government; 2 *Mac.* iv. 7.

7 *Q.* What did this wicked Jason do when he was high-priest?

A. He erected a place of exercise at Jerusalem for training up youth according to the fashion of the Greeks, and made as many of them as he could forsake the religious customs and usages of their forefathers, and conform themselves in many things to the customs and ceremonies of the heathens; *verses* 9—15.

8 *Q.* What became of this Jason?

A. A few years after, when he employed Menelaus his brother to pay his tribute at the Syrian court, he was supplanted by him; for Menelaus by bribery obtained the priesthood, and put Jason to flight.

9 *Q.* Did Menelaus behave himself better in his office?

A. He was worse than Jason; he stole some of the vessels of gold out of the temple, he went to Antioch, where he was reproved by Onias, who was yet living, for his wickedness, and out of revenge procured Onias to be slain.

10 *Q.* What was done at Jerusalem in the mean time?

A. Lysimachus being left as a deputy by Menelaus, practised many sacrileges on the vessels of the temple, which occasioned a great insurrection in the city, wherein multitudes of the party of Lysimachus were wounded and slain, and the church-robber himself was killed.

11 *Q.* Did Jason ever return again to Jerusalem?

A. When there was a false report of the death of Antiochus, Jason with a thousand men assaulted the city, and slew many citizens, but was at last put to flight, and being driven from country to country, and from city to city, he perished in a strange land, without the honour of a burial; 2 *Mac.* v. 5—10.

12 *Q.* Did Antiochus the king suffer these things to pass unresented?

A. Upon the report of such a tumult in Jerusalem, he imagined that Judea had revolted, and he came upon the city, and ordered his men of war not to spare young or old, and there were fourscore thousand destroyed in the space of three days.

13 *Q.* What profaneness was Antiochus guilty of in the temple?

A. Being conducted by Menelaus into the temple, he took away the remaining holy vessels, the altar of incense, the golden table, and the candlestick; he tore off the golden ornaments of the temple, and robbed it of the hidden treasures, he offered a large sow, that unclean and forbidden beast, on the altar of burnt-offering, and left Jerusalem overwhelmed in blood and mourning.

14 *Q.* Did he pursue this mischief and madness any longer?

A. Two years after he sent Apollonius, his collector of tribute, with a thousand men, who fell suddenly on the city on the sabbath while they were at worship, and slew the citizens and the priests; he made the sacrifices cease, led the women and children captive, pulled down the houses and the walls, built a castle or fortress on a high hill in the city of David over against the temple, to overlook and annoy them, and placed a garrison therein, and laid up the spoils of the city there.

15 *Q.* What further instances of rage did Antiochus shew against the jewish religion?

A. He issued out an order that all his dominions should be of one religion, chiefly designing to distress the Jews: He forbid their children to be circumcised, and forbid all burnt-offerings and sacrifices in the temple to the God of Israel: He called it the temple of Jupiter Olympius, set up his image on the altar, and sacrificed to it; he commanded the people to profane the sabbath, he set up altars and groves, and chapels of idols

throughout the cities, and required them to offer the flesh of swine and other unclean beasts, and then to eat it; and he destroyed the books of the law wheresoever they were found.

Note, This image of Jupiter, set up on the altar by Antiochus Epiphanes, is supposed to be the abomination that maketh desolate, foretold by Daniel, *chap.* xi. 31. as the Roman ensign with the eagle on it, which was the bird of Jupiter set up in the temple, was the abomination of desolation which Daniel foretels, *Daniel* ix. 27. and xii. 11. and which our Saviour refers to, *Matt.* xxiv. 15. Abomination is the common name for an idol in the Old Testament, and when such are set up in the sanctuary, it may be well called desolation, for the priests are driven away, and the true worship of God ceases. Observe yet further, that this Antiochus Epiphanes is called by some the jewish antichrist, because several of the same things are foretold of him by the prophet Daniel, which are also predicted of the Roman antichrist in the christian church by the apostle John.

16 *Q.* Did any of the Israelites comply with his commands?

A. Though there were multitudes who would not defile themselves, and break the law of God, yet too many of them for fear, and some out of ambition to please the king, conformed to his religion, and sacrificed, and burned incense to idols in the streets of the cities of Judea.

17 *Q.* How did the king punish those that refused?

A. He put the men to death every month, he slew several women that had caused their children to be circumcised, hanged the infants about their necks, and killed those that circumcised them. This persecution may be seen more at large, 1 *Mac.* chap. i. and iii. and 2 *Mac.* vi.

18 *Q.* What did the Samaritans do on this occasion?

A. When the Jews were in prosperity, they challenged kindred with the Jews, but they disowned them when they were under persecution: And therefore on this occasion they made an apology to Antiochus the king for having heretofore used the jewish rites, but now having renounced them, they complied with the heathen religion, and desired their temple on mount Gerizim might be made the temple of the Grecian Jupiter, the defender of strangers; 2 *Mac.* vi.

SECTION V.

OF MATTATHIAS, THE FATHER OF THE MACCABEES, AND THE GREAT REFORMER.

1 QUESTION.

When the persecution was so violent in Judea, was there any eminent public opposition made to it by any of the Jews?

Answer. Mattathias, a priest of the course of Joarib, who dwelt in Modin, was complimented by the king's officers, and tempted to comply with heathen worship there, according to the king's commandment; but he boldly renounced their superstitions, and declared his resolution to die in the religion of the Jews; 1 *Mac.* ii.

2 *Q.* What instance did he give of his courage and zeal?

A. When one of the Jews came to sacrifice on the heathen altar, which was at Modin,

he could not forbear to shew his indignation as a zealot, but ran and slew the man upon the altar, and at the same time killed the king's chief officer there who came to enforce these wicked commands.

3 *Q.* In what manner did he maintain his bold enterprize?

A. He cried with a loud voice through the city, "Whosoever is zealous of the law, let him follow me." So he and his sons fled to the mountains, and a great number of Jews fled with them, and hid themselves in the wilderness.

4 *Q.* Did not the king's army pursue them?

A. Yes, and camped against them, and attacked a considerable number of them on the sabbath-day.

5 *Q.* And did the Jews make no resistance?

A. None at all, because it was the sabbath; but they said, "Let us all die in our innocency:" Whereupon a thousand people were slain.

6 *Q.* Did Mattathias and his friends approve of this conduct?

A. It seems as if their zeal at first approved of it; but upon better consideration they decreed, it was lawful and necessary for them to defend themselves, if they were attacked again on the sabbath-day.

Note, This decree was ratified by the consent of all the priests and elders amongst them, and it was sent to all others through the land, and was made a rule in their following wars.

7 *Q.* What did king Antiochus do when he heard of this bold and public resistance made to his commands and his government?

A. He executed very great cruelties on all the Jews that fell into his hands who would not forsake the laws of Moses, since the mere terror of death did not affright them.

8 *Q.* What very remarkable instances do we find in history of this cruelty?

A. Seven brethren with their mother were terribly tormented, to constrain them to eat swine's flesh, which the law of Moses forbids.

9 *Q.* How did they endure their torments?

A. With great courage, one after another, in a long succession, they bore the various tortures that were inflicted on them, and declared they were ready to suffer rather than transgress the laws of their fathers.

10 *Q.* What tortures were those which the king executed upon them?

A. A great variety of exquisite and bloody cruelties: Their limbs were cut off, their tongues were cut out, they were fried in frying-pans, the skin of the head was torn off with the hair, and they died under the anguish and violence of these torments, while the mother at the same time looked on, and encouraged them all to suffer boldly, in opposition to the intreaties, threatenings, and commands of the king.

11 *Q.* In what manner did she encourage her sons in their sufferings?

A. By the tenderest speeches of an affectionate mother to her sons, she beseeched them to fear God, and not man, and to endure in hope of a happy resurrection, when she should receive them all again in mercy.

12 *Q.* Did she herself also suffer the torment?

A. When she had seen all her sons die like martyrs before her, she finished that sad spectacle, and died also for her religion; 2 *Mac.* vii.

13 *Q.* What did Mattathias do all this while in the mountains?

A. He still encouraged the Jews to join with him, and among others, there were many of the assideans, who were zealous for the law, resorted to him.

14 *Q.* Who were the assideans, or chasideans, as it ought to be written?

A. A sect among the Jews who were called chasidim, or the pious, who were not only zealous of the law, but of many other constitutions and traditions, and forms of mortification, beyond what the law required: Whereas those who contented themselves with what was written in the law were called zadikim, or the righteous.

15 *Q.* What exploits did Mattathias and his friends perform?

A. They went round about the towns and villages, pulled down the heathen altars, and circumcised the children; they slew and put to flight many of their enemies, and recovered several copies of the jewish law.

16 *Q.* When Mattathias died, who succeeded him?

A. Just before his death he made a noble speech to his five sons to encourage them in the defence of their religion and their country, he recommended his son Simon as a man of counsel, but he made his son Judas, surnamed Maccabeus, their captain.

17 *Q.* How came he to be called Maccabeus?

A. The motto of his standard was the first letters of that Hebrew sentence, *Exodus* xv. 11. Mi Camoka Baelim Jehovah, that is, Who is like to thee among the gods, O Lord? which letters were formed into the artificial word Maccabbi, and all that fought under his standard were called Maccabees.

Note, This has been a common practice among the Jews to frame words in this manner. So Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon, the son of Maimon, is called Rambam, Rabbi Solomon Jarchi is called Rasi. Nor is the use of the first letters of words for such kind of purposes unknown among heathens or christians. The letters S. P. Q. R. were written on the Roman standard for Senatus Populus Que Romanus, that is, the Roman senate and people. Jesus Christ our Saviour hath been called a fish, in Greek ιχθυς, by the fathers, because these are the first letters of those Greek words, Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Saviour.

SECTION VI.

OF THE JEWISH GOVERNMENT UNDER THE MACCABEES OR ASMONEANS: AND FIRST OF THE THREE BROTHERS, JUDAS, JONATHAN AND SIMON.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT valiant actions did Judas and his brethren do in defence of the law, and against the persecutors?

Answer. He won many battles against king Antiochus and his generals, and encouraged himself and his soldiers in the name of God whensoever they began to faint.

2 *Q.* Where are these acts of Judas and his brethren recorded?

A. The earliest account of them is found in the first and second books of Maccabees.

Here note, That the first book of Maccabees is a very accurate and excellent history, and comes nearest to the style and manner of the sacred writings, and is supposed to be written a little after these persecutions and wars were ended: But the second book consists of several pieces of much less value: It begins with two epistles from the Jews

of Jerusalem, but both are supposed to be fabulous stories, and in some parts impossible to be true. The following parts of it pretend to be an abridgment of the history of one Jason, it relates some of the persecutions of Antiochus, and the acts of Judas amplified with particular circumstances, but it is not of equal esteem with the first book, for it seems to affect miracles and prodigious events beyond reasonable credibility.

3 *Q.* How did king Antiochus resent these attempts of Judas, and his successes against him?

A. When he went into Persia to gather the tribute of the countries there, he left Lysias with half his army, and with express orders to destroy and root the Jews out of their land.

4 *Q.* Did Lysias pursue the king's orders?

A. Yes, with great diligence he sought to execute these cruel orders: His army of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse encamped at Emmaus near Jerusalem, and another army of a thousand merchants flocked thither upon presumption of their victory, with great quantities of silver and gold, to buy the captives for slaves.

5 *Q.* How did their wicked counsel to destroy Israel succeed?

A. When they were thus secure and confident of success, Judas and his brethren assembled in Mizpah, fasted, put on sackcloth, laid open the book of the law before God where the heathens had painted their images, cried mightily unto God for help, sounded the trumpets, brought the army into order, and prepared for battle and for death, unless God pleased to make them conquerors.

6 *Q.* What was the event of so much pious zeal and courage?

A. Judas and his army put to flight and destroyed several large parties that Lysias had sent against him, they drove the enemy out of Jerusalem, and almost out of the land of Judea, and took a very large booty both from the army and the merchants.

7 *Q.* What was the first work that Judas and his people applied themselves to upon this great success?

A. They went up into Mount Sion, and when they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, the gates burned up, shrubs and grass growing in the courts of the temple, they rent their clothes, fell down upon their faces, and made great lamentation with humble cries to heaven.

8 *Q.* Had they power and time to repair the temple, and restore the worship of God?

A. Yes, they applied themselves to the work with all diligence, they sought out priests of blameless conversation to cleanse the sanctuary, they pulled down the altar of burnt-offering, because the heathen had defiled it, they built a new altar as the law directs with whole stones, they made new holy vessels, the altar of incense, the table, and the candlesticks, all of gold, which they had taken from their enemies, and they set all the parts of divine worship in order again, and offered sacrifice according to the law.

9 *Q.* How did they kindle the sacred fire on the altar?

A. Having lost the fire which came down from heaven, which was kept burning on the altar at Jerusalem before the Babylonish captivity, they struck fire with flints, and so kindled the sacrifices and the lamps, 2 *Mac.* x. 3.

Note, We do not read that the second temple ever had this sacred fire; the story of Jeremiah's hiding it, in 2 *Mac.* chap. i. is counted a mere fable.

10 *Q.* Was there any thing remarkable in the time or day of this restoration of temple-worship?

A. That very day three years wherein the heathen had profaned the altar by the offering of unclean beasts on it, it was dedicated with songs, and harps, and cymbals, and burnt-offerings of God's appointment, and that for eight days together. This was two years after Judas had the chief command, and three years and a half after the city and temple had been laid desolate by Apollonius.

11 *Q.* What lasting memorial was appointed for this restoration of the worship of God in the temple?

A. Judas and his brethren, and the whole congregation ordained that these days of the dedication of the altar should be kept yearly with mirth and gladness.

12 *Q.* Did the worship of God continue long here after this solemnity?

A. We are told by historians, that it continued from this time without any interruption from the heathens till the destruction of the temple by the Romans, though Jerusalem and the temple were often in the hands of the heathens.

Note, Some say this was that very feast of dedication which our Saviour honoured with his presence at Jerusalem, though others think it was the dedication of Solomon's temple; yet the season being winter, it rather agrees to the time of Maccabeus's dedication.

13 *Q.* Were not the Jews at all annoyed or disturbed by the enemy in this pious work?

A. There was still that fortress built by Apollonius remaining in the hand of the heathens and apostate Jews; it stood on Mount Acra, a rising ground over-against the mountain of the temple, and rather higher than that mountain, whence the Jews received some annoyance in going to the temple.

14 *Q.* What further care did Judas and his people take for their own security?

A. When they could not drive out the enemy at once, they built up Mount Sion with high walls and strong towers, and put a garrison there to keep it, and as far as possible to secure the priests and people when they went to worship, and to prevent the gentiles from treading down the sanctuary again.

15 *Q.* Did Judas and the people continue to enjoy peace?

A. Though they maintained the temple-worship, yet they were still engaged in war: For all the nations round about them were much displeased that the sanctuary was restored, and they attacked the Jews on every side; but God gave Judas and his brethren the victory in many battles, and they returned to Jerusalem, and gave thanks to God in Sion for his remarkable protection of them, that they had not lost one man; 1 *Mac.* v. 54.

16 *Q.* Did Judas make any more expeditions against his enemies?

A. He led forth his forces against Gorgias one of Antiochus's generals, and against the Idumeans who had been very vexatious to the Jews; and though several of the Jews were slain, yet Judas renewing the courage of his army by singing psalms with a loud voice, and rushing upon their enemies, put them to flight.

17 *Q.* What remarkable crime was found among the Jews that were slain?

A. When they came to bury their dead they found things consecrated to idols under the garment of every Jew that was slain, whereupon the people praised the Lord, the

righteous Judge of men: But without any encouragement from scripture, they offered sacrifices and prayers for the pardon of the dead; 2 *Mac.* xii. 34—45.

Note, It is from this place in the second book of the Maccabees that the papists borrow their prayers for the dead.

18 *Q.* Where was Antiochus, the king, all this while?

A. He was gone to Persia, not only to receive his tribute, as 1 *Mac.* iii. 31. but to plunder the temple of Diana, who among the Persians is called Zaretis, which temple stood at Elymas, and had incredible riches of gold and silver, and golden armour, which were laid up there.

19 *Q.* Did he succeed in this enterprize?

A. The people of the country having notice of his design, joined together in defence of that idol's temple, and beat him off with shame.

20 *Q.* How did he receive the news of the defeat of his generals and armies in Judea?

A. With utmost rage and indignation, as well as grief of mind, but he resolved to make haste thither, and threatened to make the city of Jerusalem as one grave for the Jews, where he would bury the whole nation.

21 *Q.* What followed upon this insolent speech of Antiochus the king?

A. He was immediately smitten with an incurable plague in the midst of his journey, his bowels were seized with grievous torment, his chariot was overthrown, and he was sorely bruised, and forced to be confined to his bed in a little town on the road, where he lay languishing under foul ulcers of body and sharp terror of mind till he died.

Note, It hath been observed by historians, that such a sort of death by foul ulcers hath befallen many persecutors in elder and later times.

22 *Q.* Had he any regret upon his conscience, particularly for his cruelty and wickedness practised upon the Jews?

A. Both Jews and heathens give us an account of the dreadful anguish of mind which he then suffered; and though the heathen historian attributes it to the intended sacrilege and robbery designed upon the temple of Diana, yet the jewish historians acquaint us, that Antiochus himself imputed his calamities to the horrid impieties and cruelties that he had been guilty of against the God of Israel and his people, and bitterly repented of them with inward horror on his death-bed.

Note, This Antiochus Epiphanes having been a great oppressor of the jewish church, and the type of antichrist, there is a larger account of him in Daniel's prophecy than of any other prince. The eleventh chapter, *verse* 11—45. relates wholly to him, as well as some passages in the eight and twelfth chapters; the explication and accomplishment of which may be read in Doctor Prideaux's Connexion, Part II. Book 3. And the accomplishment is so exact, that Porphyry, a learned heathen in the third century, pretends that it is mere history, and that it was written after the event.

23 *Q.* What became of the garrison of the Syrians in the tower of Acra, which so much molested the Jews in Jerusalem?

A. Judas Maccabeus besieged them, whereupon Antiochus Eupator, the son and successor of Epiphanes, brought a vast army against Judas, consisting of a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, thirty-two elephants, and three hundred armed chariots of war.

24 *Q.* What could the Jews do against so great an army?

A. Judas having given this watch-word, "Victory is of the Lord," fell upon them in the night, and having slain four thousand immediately, and six hundred the next morning, made a safe retreat to Jerusalem.

25 *Q.* What remarkable instance of courage was given by Eleazar the brother of Judas in this battle?

A. When he saw one elephant higher, and more adorned than the rest, he supposed the king himself was on it, therefore he ran furiously through the troops, and made his way to the beast, he thrust up his spear under his belly, and the beast with the tower that was upon him falling down crushed him to death.

26 *Q.* Had Antiochus Eupator's army any success afterward against the Jews?

A. They marched to Jerusalem under the command of Lysias, they besieged the sanctuary, and when the Jews were near surrendering for want of provision, they were strangely relieved by the providence of God.

27 *Q.* In what manner did this relief come?

A. Lysias hearing that the city of Antioch was seized by one Philip, a favourite of the late king, who had taken upon him the government of Syria, persuaded the present king to grant peace to the Jews, which he did: Yet, contrary to his own promise, he pulled down the fortifications of the temple, when he came and saw how strong they were.

28 *Q.* What became of Menelaus the wicked high-priest?

A. He had attended the king's army in this expedition against Jerusalem, in hopes to recover his office, and to be made governor there: But Lysias finding this war exceeding troublesome, accused Menelaus to the king as the author of all this mischief; whereupon he was condemned to a miserable death, being cast headlong into a tower of ashes fifty cubits high.

29 *Q.* Who was his successor in the priesthood?

A. Onias the son of Onias the third, and nephew to Menelaus, was the more rightful successor, but the king rejected him; and being disappointed of it, he fled into Egypt; while Alcimus or Jacimus, one of the family of Aaron, though not in the right line of Josedek to which the priesthood belonged, was made high-priest by Antiochus Eupator the king.

Note, It was Joshua the son of Josedech or Jozadak, was the rightful high-priest at the return from Babylon. See *Ezra* iii. 2. and *Hag.* i. 1.

30 *Q.* Was Alcimus admitted to the exercise of the office in Jerusalem?

A. He was refused by the Jews, because he complied with the heathen superstition in the time of the persecution; but he besought the aid of Demetrius, the new king, against Judas and the people, who refused to receive him.

31 *Q.* How came this Demetrius to be king?

A. He was the son of Seleucus Philopator, who was the eldest brother of Antiochus Epiphanes; and though he could not persuade the Romans to assist him in seizing the kingdom of Syria, since Antiochus Epiphanes was dead, yet he landed in Syria, and persuaded the people that the Romans had sent him: Whereupon Antiochus Eupator and Lysias were seized by their own soldiers, and put to death by order of Demetrius.

32 *Q.* Did Demetrius establish Alcimus in the priesthood in opposition to Judas and his people.

A. He endeavoured to do it by sending one Bacchides against them, but without

success; afterwards making Nicanor, who was master of his elephants, governor of Judea, he sent him to slay Judas, and to subdue the Jews.

33 *Q.* What success had Nicanor in this attempt?

A. Though at first he was unwilling to make war on Judas, yet being urged by the king, he pursued it with fury; and having spoken many blasphemous words against the temple and the God of Israel, and threatening to demolish it, and to build a temple to Bacchus in the room of it, he himself was slain, and his army was shamefully routed by Judas.

34 *Q.* What encouragement had Judas to hope for victory in this battle?

A. Not only from the blasphemies of Nicanor, but he was animated also by a divine vision, and thus he encountered his enemies with cheerfulness, and with earnest prayer to God; 2 *Mac.* xiv. and xv.

35 *Q.* What rejoicing did Judas and the Jews make on this occasion?

A. He cut off Nicanor's head, and his right hand, which he had stretched out against the temple, and hanged them up upon one of the towers of Jerusalem, and appointed a yearly day of thanksgiving in memory of this victory, which is called Nicanor's day.

36 *Q.* What was the next act of Judas for the good of his country?

A. Hearing of the growing greatness of the Romans, he sent to make a league for mutual defence with them, to which the Romans consented, and established it, acknowledging the Jews as their friends and allies, and ordered Demetrius to vex them no more.

37 *Q.* Did Demetrius obey his orders?

A. Before this order came to his hand, he had sent Bacchides the second time to revenge Nicanor's death, and to establish Alcimus in the priesthood.

38 *Q.* What success had this second expedition of Bacchides against the Jews?

A. A very unhappy one indeed for the Jews; for he so much overpowered Judas with the number of his forces, who had then but three thousand men with him, that even the greatest part of these three thousand fled from him for fear: And Judas, being ashamed to fly for his life, he was slain through an excess of courage.

39 *Q.* What mischiefs ensued on the death of Judas?

A. The Jews were greatly disheartened, Bacchides prevailed every where, took Jerusalem, subdued the greatest part of the country, and put to death the friends of Judas where he could find them; many apostate Jews sided with him. Alcimus exercised the high-priesthood in a very wicked manner, and imitated the heathen superstition in the worship of God, he gave orders to pull down the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary, and is supposed also to break down the wall which divided the more holy part of the mountain of the temple from the less holy, and gave the gentiles equal liberty with the Jews to enter there. Note,

First, It is said in 1 *Mac.* ix. 54. that he actually pulled down the work of the prophets, whatever that was; but that he only gave order for pulling down the wall of the inner court, which may be supposed to be the court of the priests. Note,

Secondly, It is hard to determine how far the wall which separated the gentiles from that outer court of the temple, which was made for the Jews, was of God's appointment, or how early it was built; we do not read of it in scripture, neither in the building of the temple of Solomon, where there was only the court of the priests, and the great court; nor in the rebuilding it by Zerubbabel does scripture tell us of such a separa-

tion. Indeed, in Jehosaphat's time we read of a new court; 2 *Chron.* xx. 5. What it was no man knows certainly; perhaps it was only one court renewed. For in Manasseh's days, which was about two hundred years after, there were but two courts; 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 5. Doctor Prideaux indeed supposes, that the latter prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, ordered a low wall, or rather inclosure, to be built, called Chel, in the second temple, within which no uncircumcised person should enter: And one reason of that opinion is, because, 1 *Mac.* ix. 54. it is said, that Alcimus pulled down also the work of the prophets. That there was such a separating wall in the days of the Maccabees, or before, is generally supposed; that this court of the gentiles was also in Herod's temple is agreed, and there seems to be a reference to it in Eph. ii. 14. *Having broken down the middle wall of partition.* See Lowth on *Ezek.* xl. 17. But whether any of the arguments are effectual to prove it was of divine appointment, the learned reader must judge. See Prideaux's Connexion of the Old and New Testament, Part II. Book the fourth, page 251. in octavo, and Lightfoot of the Temple, Chapter 17.

If it be, as some have maintained, that the Jews, in rebuilding that temple under Zerubbabel, took a pattern, in a great measure, from the prophetical temple in Ezekiel's vision, then there seems to have been a court large enough for the court of the gentiles; for chapter xl. 5. and xlii. 20. *There was a wall on the outside of the house round about of five hundred reeds square, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.* See Lowth on these texts. Perhaps in these times this was called the mount of the temple.

40 *Q.* What became of Alcimus when he practised these things with insolence?

A. He was smitten by the hand of God with a palsy, his speech was taken away, so that he could give no further wicked commands, nor so much as set in order his own house, and he died in great torment; 1 *Mac.* ix. 54, 55.

41 *Q.* Did the surviving brethren of Judas Maccabeus make no efforts against these their enemies?

A. Yes; his brother Jonathan being chosen by the people, took on him the government: And though their brother John was slain by the Jambrites, yet Simon remained; and these two made such a continual resistance, that in some years time, Alcimus being dead, Bacchides grew weary of the war, and he was inclined at last to make a firm peace; and then he restored the Jews which had been his prisoners, and departed from Judea without ever returning.

42 *Q.* What use did Jonathan make of this peace?

A. He governed Israel according to the law; he restored the jewish religion, reformed every thing as far as he could, both in church and state, and rebuilt the walls and fortifications of Sion.

43 *Q.* Who performed the office of high-priest all this time?

A. There was a vacancy of the office for seven years after the death of Alcimus; till Alexander, an impostor, pretending to be the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, seized the kingdom of Syria, and made high proposals to engage Jonathan on his side against Demetrius, who had been their enemy. Among these proposals, one was this, *That he should be constituted and maintained the governor and the high-priest of the Jews, and be called the king's friend;* 1 Mac. x. 18—20.

Note, I think Josephus supposes Judas to have been made high-priest before his death; but Doctor Prideaux does not seem to follow him in this matter, nor doth the

book of the Maccabees give any account of it. Though, upon Judas's restoring the jewish worship in the temple, there must be some person to officiate as high-priest upon some occasions: And Onias being fled into Egypt, whether Judas himself did it occasionally, or deputed one of the other priests to do it, is not certain: Perhaps Judas might do the duty, as being of the chief families of the priesthood, though he did not assume the title.

44 *Q.* Did Jonathan accept of these proposals?

A. There being no other high-priest in view, he accepted it by the consent of all the people; and at the feast of tabernacles he put on the holy robe. Being thus dignified, he joined with Alexander, who still grew stronger, and slew his rival Demetrius in battle.

Note here, That from this time forward the high-priesthood continued in this family of the Asmoneans or Maccabees till the time of Herod, who changed it from an office of inheritance to an arbitrary appointment. It may be proper to observe here, that the family whence the Maccabees came are called Asmoneans. For Mattathias their father was the son of John, the son of Simon, the son of Asmonæus.

45 *Q.* But was Jonathan of the eldest family of Aaron, to whom the priesthood belonged?

A. Whether the Maccabees or Asmoneans were of the race of Josedeck, the high-priest, is uncertain; *Ezra* iii. 2. but it is certain they were of the course of Joarib, which was of the first class of the sons of Aaron; 1 *Mac.* ii. 1. 1 *Chron.* xxiv. 7. And therefore, on the failure of the former family of priests, and none appearing with a better title, he had the first right to succeed: Besides that he was chosen to it in a vacancy by all the people.

46 *Q.* Where was Onias all this while?

A. Having fled into Egypt, he gained such an interest in Ptolemy Philometer, the king, as to build a jewish temple in Egypt, exactly like that of Jerusalem, adorned with the same furniture of vessels and altars for incense and sacrifice; and to have himself and his family established the high-priests of it, where they performed the same religious service as was done at Jerusalem.

47 *Q.* In what part of Egypt did he build this temple?

A. In the place where Heliopolis, or the city of the sun, stood; and there he built a city also, and called it Onion, after his own name?

48 *Q.* But how did he persuade the Jews to perform such worship at this temple?

A. By citing the words of Isaiah, chapter xix. verses 18, 19. *In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan:—In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, &c.* Which is truly to be interpreted concerning the future state of the gospel in that country in the days of the Messiah; but Onias applied it to his own temple and altar.

49 *Q.* How long did this temple continue?

A. Till after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, which was above two hundred years; and then the city Onion and the temple were both destroyed by the command of Vespasian, the emperor of Rome.

50 *Q.* Did Jonathan go on to secure the Jews of Judea in their possessions and their religion?

A. By making leagues with the princes and states that favoured him, and by assisting

sometimes one and sometimes another, as the interest and powers of princes were often changing, he defended and governed his own nation.

51 *Q.* What became of him at last?

A. By the treachery of one Tryphon, who sought the kingdom of Syria, he was seized, and shut up close prisoner in Ptolemais; 1 *Mac.* xi. and 12. and afterwards was slain with his two sons; *chap.* xiii.

52 *Q.* Who succeeded Jonathan in the high-priesthood and government?

A. Simon his brother, by the request of all the people.

53 *Q.* What were some of the first enterprizes of Simon?

A. After an honourable burial of his brother at Modin, the city of his fathers, and the noble and lofty monument, and seven pyramids which he set up for his parents, his four brethren and himself, he fortified the cities of Judea, made a league with young Demetrius, the son of Demetrius, took the city of Gaza, cleansed the houses from idols, and built himself a house there.

54 *Q.* Did the garrison in the tower of Acra, near the temple, continue to annoy the Jews in their worship?

A. Notwithstanding all the attempts of Judas and Jonathan, these enemies remained still till the days of Simon, who shut them up so closely, that after great numbers perished with famine, the rest yielded up the tower to Simon: Immediately he cleansed it from its pollutions, and entered into it with harps and songs, and great triumph.

55 *Q.* What precautions did Simon take against the like annoyance for time to come?

A. By consent and assistance of the people, he pulled down the tower, and reduced the mountain itself so low, that there might be no possibility of any future annoyance to the worship of the temple from that place.

56 *Q.* What further success had Simon in his government?

A. He established Jerusalem and Judea in great peace and plenty; he sought out the law, and made it to be obeyed; he beautified the sanctuary, multiplied the vessels of the temple, and maintained their religion in the divine institutions of it.

57 *Q.* What peculiar honour was done him by the Jews?

A. In a general assembly of the priests and elders, and the people of the Jews, met together at Jerusalem, he was constituted their prince, as well as their high-priest; and these dignities and offices were settled upon his posterity for ever. This was engraven on tables of brass, together with the good deeds of himself and his family, which had merited such an honour; and these tables were hung up in the sanctuary.

58 *Q.* What regard was paid to him among the heathen nations?

A. Several princes and people, the Lacedemonians, the Romans, and Antiochus, surnamed Sidetes, the son of Demetrius, king of Syria, all sought his friendship, made leagues and covenants with him, and conferred on him special honours; 1 *Mac.* xiv. and xv.

59 *Q.* Did Antiochus keep his covenants with Simon?

A. By no means; for when he had vanquished Tryphon, his rival, he brake his league with Simon, and invaded some part of Judea: But his general, Cendebeus, was routed by Simon and his two eldest sons, Judas and John, whose surname was Hyrcanus.

60 *Q.* What was the fate of Simon at last?

A. When Simon was visiting the cities, and giving orders for their welfare, one Ptolemeus, who was his son-in-law, invited him and his sons to a banquet at Jericho,

and slew Simon, with two of his sons, in order to get the government of the country into his own hands; and sent privately to kill John also.

61 *Q.* Did Ptolemeus succeed in this his treacherous and murderous enterprize?

A. John having got timely notice of it, slew the assassins, and was invested with the high-priesthood and the government after his father.

Note, Here ends that excellent history, the first book of the Maccabees. The following part of this account of the Jews is borrowed chiefly from Josephus, who usually calls John by the surname of Hyrcanus.

SECTION VII.

OF THE JEWISH AFFAIRS UNDER THE CONDUCT OF THE POSTERITY AND SUCCESSORS OF SIMON THE MACCABEE; AND OF THE SEVERAL SECTS AMONG THE JEWS, VIZ. PHARISEES, SADDUCEES, ESSENES, HERODIANS, AND KARAITES.

1 QUESTION.

Did John Hyrcanus enjoy his office in peace?

Answer. Antiochus Sidetes being informed of the death of Simon, and being invited by Ptolemeus, invaded Judea again, besieged Jerusalem, and reduced Hyrcanus and the Jews to the last extremity by famine: But when they sued for peace he granted it, upon condition of paying certain tributes to the king, and demolishing the fortifications of Jerusalem.

Note, About this time Jesus the son of Sirach, a Jew of Jerusalem, coming into Egypt, translated the book of Ecclesiasticus, written by Jesus his grandfather, out of Hebrew into Greek, for the use of the hellenistic Jews there. The ancients called it panareton, or the treasury of all virtue.

2 *Q.* How did the affairs of the Jews succeed under Hyrcanus?

A. A few years afterwards he took advantage of the vast confusions that ensued among the nations upon the death of Antiochus, to enlarge his borders, by seizing some neighbouring towns on several sides of Judea; and to renounce all his dependance upon the kings of Syria.

3 *Q.* Was he supported therein by any foreign powers?

A. He renewed the league of friendship which his father Simon had made with the Romans, who were then growing to their grandeur; and they ordered that he should be freed from the late imposed tribute, and that the Syrians should make reparation for the damages they had done him.

4 *Q.* In what manner did Hyrcanus deal with the Edomites, or Idumeans, who were on the south of Judea?

A. He constrained them to embrace the jewish religion, or to leave their country; whereupon they chose to forsake their idolatry, and became proselytes to judaism, and were mingled and incorporated with the Jews; and by this means, in less than two hundred years, their very name was lost.

Note, In defence of this practice of Hyrcanus among the Idumeans, which seems to be so contrary to the laws of nature and scripture, it may be said, that at this time these Edomites had encroached on the land of Judea, and inhabited all the south part of it; so

that Hyrcanus, in banishing those who would not become Jews, did but dispossess them of that country which was given to the Jews by God himself. Yet it must be confessed, by this practice he seems to have set an unhappy pattern to his successors, to impose the religion of the Jews on conquered countries by force.

5 *Q.* How did he treat the Samaritans on the north when his power was thus increased?

A. He marched with his army and took Shechem, which was then the chief seat of the Samaritan sect; and he destroyed their temple on mount Gerizim, which Sandballat had built; though they continued still to keep an altar there, and to offer sacrifices.

6 *Q.* How came Shechem to be their chief seat instead of Samaria?

A. They were expelled from Samaria by Alexander, for killing one of his deputy governors in a tumult; and they retiring to Shechem, made that their chief seat; while Alexander repeopled Samaria with heathens of the Syrian and Macedonian race.

7 *Q.* Did Hyrcanus extend his power further on that side of the country?

A. He besieged Samaria and took it, and utterly demolished it; he not only ruled in Judea, but in Galilee also, and the neighbouring towns: He became one of the most considerable princes of his age, and preserved the jewish church and state in safety from their enemies, throughout a long government.

8 *Q.* What other remarkable actions are ascribed to Hyrcanus?

A. He was esteemed a prophet for one or two notable predictions, or knowledge of things done at a distance. He built the castle Baris on a steep rock, fifty cubits high, without the outer square of the temple, but on the same mountain: This was the palace of all the asmonean princes in Jerusalem, and here the sacred robes of the high-priest were always laid up when they were not in use.

9 *Q.* What use was afterward made of this castle?

A. Herod new built it, and made it a very strong fortress, to command both the city and the temple, and called it Antonia, in honour of his great friend, Mark Anthony of Rome: He raised it so high that he might see what was done in the temple, and send his soldiers in case of any tumult. Here the Romans kept a strong garrison, and the governor of it was called captain of the temple; *Acts* xxi. 31.

Note, It was from this place the centinels spying the Jews ready to kill Paul, gave notice to the governor, or chief captain, who went down immediately with some soldiers into the court of the gentiles, whither they had dragged St. Paul to kill him, and rescued him, and brought him up the stairs into this castle; and it was upon these stairs that Paul obtained leave to speak to the people. See *Acts* xxi. 26—40.

10 *Q.* What troubles did Hyrcanus meet with toward the end of his life?

A. His title to the high-priesthood was unjustly called in question by a bold man among the Pharisees; and, being craftily imposed upon to think it the opinion of all that party, he hastily renounced that sect, for which he had before the greatest value, he abolished their constitutions, and falling in with the sect of the Sadducees, lost his esteem and love among the common people.

11 *Q.* Since you mention the sect of the Pharisees here, pray let us know what were the chief sects among the Jews?

A. About this time, the most considerable sects were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes; though, in the next century, arose also the Herodians; and some hundred of years after was a sect called the Karaites.

12 *Q.* What peculiar opinions were held by the Pharisees?

A. The most distinguishing character of this sect was their zeal for the traditions of the elders; for while they acknowledged the writings of Moses and the prophets to be divine, they pretended that these traditions also were delivered to Moses on mount Sinai, and conveyed down, without writing, through the several generations of the Jews, from father to son: And, by reason of their pretences to a more strict and rigorous observance of the law, according to their traditions, which they had superadded to it, they looked on themselves as more holy than other men, and they were called Pharisees, that is, persons separated from others.

Note, These were the persons who had so much corrupted the law in our Saviour's time, and made it void by their traditions: Yet their doctrine generally prevailed among the scribes and the lawyers, who were writers and explainers of the law; and the bulk of the common people had them in high esteem and veneration, so that they were the most numerons of any sect.

13 *Q.* Is the sect of the Pharisees still in being?

A. The present religion of the Jews, in their several dispersions, except among the few Karaites, is wholly formed and practised according to the traditions of the Pharisees, rather than according to the law and prophets: So that they have corrupted the old jewish religion, in the same manner as the papists have the christian.

14 *Q.* What were the opinions of the Sadducees?

A. The Sadducees at first are supposed by Doctor Prideaux to be no more than the Zadikim, who only stuck to the written word of God, renouncing all other traditions: And that probably they went no further than this in the days of Hyrcanus; though the talmudical writers derive their name and their dangerous doctrines more early, from one Zadoc, as is before related. But it is certain that afterward the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead, and the very being of angels or spirits, or souls of men departed, and any existence in a future state: They supposed God to be the only Spirit, and that he rewarded and punished mankind in this world only, and there was nothing to be hoped or feared after death: Which principles render this sect an impious party of men.

15 *Q.* What did they profess as the rule of their religion?

A. They not only rejected all unwritten traditions, but all the written word of God, except the five books of Moses; for the doctrine of a future state is not so evidently taught therein: And therefore Christ argues not with them out of the Psalms or prophets, but only out of the law of Moses; when he proves a future state or resurrection from God's being the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; *Luke* xx. 37.

16 *Q.* How long did this sect of the Sadducees continue?

A. Though all the common people had the chief veneration for the Pharisees, yet most of the richest and the greatest among them fell into the opinions of the Sadducees for several generations, but they were all cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem; nor do we find any mention of them as a sect for many ages after, till their name was revived and applied to the Karaites by way of reproach.

17 *Q.* Who were these Karaites?

A. A much better sect among the Jews, who, in the sixth century after Christ, began to be so much offended with the incredible stories and fooleries of the talmud which was

then published, and with the strange mystical senses which some of the Jews put on the scriptures, that they confined themselves only to the written word of the scripture, which in the Babylonish language is called Kara; and, for the most part, they content themselves with the literal sense of it. They are sometimes, but very unjustly, called Sadducees by the rabbinical or talmudical Jews.

18 *Q.* Where are these Karaites to be found?

A. Very few of them dwell in these western parts of the world; they are found chiefly in Poland, and among the Crim Tartars; a few also in Egypt and Persia. But they are counted men of the best learning, and greatest probity and virtue among the Jews; and it is remarkable among them, that they perform their public worship in the language of the country where they dwell.

19 *Q.* What were the Essenes?

A. They seem to have been originally of the same sect as the Pharisees, but they set up for a more mortified way of living, and perhaps more unblameable. They so far agreed with the Sadducees, as to acknowledge or expect no resurrection of the body; but they believed a future state of eternal happiness or misery, according to their behaviour in this life. They seem to have been distributed into societies or fraternities, and to have had no private possessions, but a common stock for the supply of all. They were in a special manner religious toward God, both on the sabbath and in their daily devotions; and exceeding friendly and benevolent toward men. They did not disclaim marriage; but they entered into that state more rarely, and with great caution: And instead of children of their own, they bred up poor children in their own sect. They were very abstemious as to their food, and their habit was a plain white garment. Their rules of life are reported to us more at large by Josephus and by Philo, two Jews; they are described also by Pliny, a heathen, and by some of the christian fathers.

20 *Q.* If they were a considerable sect in the days of our Saviour, how came it to pass that they are not mentioned in the New Testament?

A. Some have supposed that they seldom came into cities, but living so very plain and abstemious a life, they resided for the most part in the country; and thus they fell not under our Saviour's observation. And besides, they being a very honest and sincere sort of people, they gave no such reason for reproof and censure as others very justly deserved. Though it must be confessed also, that their disbelief of the resurrection of the body, their non-attendance on the temple worship, their traditional washings, and self-invented purifications, their rigorous and needless abstinences from some sorts of meats, and other like superstitious customs and will-worship, might have given our Saviour just occasion for reproof, had they come in his way: And perhaps they are censured under the general name of Pharisees, in those superstitious traditions wherein they both agreed.

21 *Q.* Now we are speaking of the several sects of the Jews, let us know also what were the Herodians?

A. This sect arose not till the time of Herod the Great, the king of Judea: And it is plain they had peculiar evil tenets as well as the other sects, since our Saviour warned his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. Indeed they opposed the Pharisees, and very justly in one point; for the Pharisees scarce thought it lawful to pay taxes directly to heathens, though they acquired the sovereign power, and particularly to

Cæsar in that day: But their special error, which Christ calls their leaven, seems to be this, that it was lawful, when constrained by superiors, to comply with idolatry, and with a false religion. Herod seems to have framed this sect on purpose to justify himself in this practice; who being an Idumean by nation, was indeed half a Jew and half a heathen; and affected a conformity to the gentiles in some things, to please the Romans, who made him king, while at the same time he professed judaism.

Note, The Sadducees generally came into this complaisant opinion; and the same persons which are called Herodians in *Mark* viii. 15. are called Sadducees in *Matt.* xvi. 6. But this sect died in a little time, for we hear no more of them after the days of our Saviour.

22 *Q.* Having done with the several sects of the Jews, let us return now, and enquire who succeeded Hyrcanus at his death?

A. Aristobulus, his eldest son, took the office of the high-priest, and governor of the country; and he was the first, since the captivity of Babylon, who put a diadem upon his head, and assumed the title of king.

23 *Q.* What is recorded of him?

A. He put his own mother to death because she made some pretence to the government; he sent all his brothers save one to prison; then he attacked and subdued the Itureans, who live on the north-east of the land of Galilee, and forced them to be circumcised and receive the jewish religion. At last he was persuaded to put his favourite brother to death, upon an unjust suspicion; and then he died himself, vomiting blood, and in great horror for his crimes.

24 *Q.* Who succeeded him?

A. His next brother, Alexander, surnamed Jannæus, took the kingdom, who also put another of the brothers to death, because of some attempt to supplant him.

25 *Q.* What success had Alexander in his government?

A. He having settled his affairs at home, attacked some of his neighbours, and dealt very deceitfully with Ptolemy Lathyrus, the heir to the crown of Egypt, who came to their assistance: Whereupon there ensued a bloody battle between them, near the river Jordan, in Galilee, wherein Alexander's army was utterly defeated, and he lost thirty thousand men.

Note, There is a very cruel and barbarous action attributed to Lathyrus on this occasion, *viz.* That coming with his army, in the evening after the victory, to take up his quarters in the adjoining villages, and finding them full of women and children, he caused them to be all slaughtered, and their bodies to be cut in pieces, put into caldrons over the fire to be boiled, as if it were for supper; that so he might leave an opinion in that country that his men fed upon human flesh, and thereby might create the greater dread and terror of his army through those parts. After this, Lathyrus ranged at liberty all over the country, ravaging, plundering, and destroying it in a very lamentable manner: For Alexander, after this battle, was in no condition to resist him.

26 *Q.* Did Alexander ever recover this defeat?

A. Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, who, with her younger son, withheld the kingdom from Lathyrus, her eldest, did assist and support Alexander Jannæus, lest, if Lathyrus should have become master of Judea, he might also have recovered Egypt out of her hands: Whereupon Alexander raised his head again, besieged other places, and took Gadara

and Amathus towards Galilee, together with much treasure: But he was surprized by Theodorus, prince of Philadelphia, who had laid up that treasure there, and was overthrown with the slaughter of ten thousand men. Yet, being a man of courage, and diligence, again he recruited his army, took the city of Gaza from the Philistines, and gave thorough license to his soldiers there to kill, plunder, and destroy as they pleased. He subdued their principal cities, and made them part of his dominions; whereupon several of the Philistines turned Jews: And indeed it was now grown a custom among the Asmonean princes, to impose their religion upon all their conquests, leaving them no other choice but to become proselytes, or to be banished.

27 *Q.* How did his own people, the Jews, carry it towards him?

A. The Pharisees continued their wrath against him, for rigorously maintaining the decrees of his father, who abolished their constitutions; and by their powerful influence, they stirred up the people against him so far, that while he was executing the high-priest's office at the altar, they pelted him with citrons, and called him reproachful names.

28 *Q.* In what manner did Alexander resent it?

A. He slew six thousand of them immediately, and he chose his own guards out of the heathen nations, never daring afterwards to trust himself with the Jews. At last there broke out a civil war between him and his people, which lasted six years, brought great calamity on both, and occasioned the death of above fifty thousand people.

29 *Q.* How was this war carried on?

A. Though Alexander had many victories over them, yet being wearied out, he desired peace, and offered to grant them whatsoever they could reasonably desire: But upon his enquiry what terms would please them, they answered with one voice, "that he should cut his own throat," so dreadful was their enmity against him; and upon this answer, the war was still pursued with fury on both sides.

30 *Q.* How was this war ended at last?

A. Alexander Jannæus the king, having lost one great battle, resumed his courage, and afterward gained another, which concluded the war; for having cut off the greatest part of his enemies, he drove the rest into the city Bethome, and besieged them there: And having taken the place, he carried eight hundred of them to Jerusalem, and there caused them to be all crucified in one day; and their wives and children to be slain before their faces, while they hung dying on their crosses. In the mean time, he treated his wives and concubines with this bloody spectacle at a feast. This terrified the Jews indeed so effectually, that they made no more insurrections against him; though he got a most infamous name by it in that and the following ages. A dreadful instance of the barbarity of a high-priest with civil power!

31 *Q.* Did this cruel tyrant come to a natural death?

A. The providence of God, which does not always punish sinners in this life, permitted him to die in the camp of a quartan ague, which had hung long upon him, while he was besieging a castle of the Gerasenes, beyond Jordan. And though he left two sons behind him, yet he bequeathed the government to Alexandra his wife, during her life; and to be disposed of at her death to which of her sons she pleased.

32 *Q.* How did this woman reconcile herself to the Jews, so as to permit her to reign over them.

A. By her husband's advice, upon his death-bed, she concealed his death till the castle was taken; then leading back the army to Jerusalem in triumph, made her court to the Pharisees, resigned up his dead corpse to their pleasure, to be abused, or buried, as they should think fit, and promised to follow their advice in all the affairs of government: For he had assured her, that they were the best of friends and the worst of enemies; and that if she would but be ruled by them, they would make her rule over others.

33 *Q.* What success had this conduct of Alexandra?

A. All the success she desired: The people were influenced by the Pharisees to give the corpse of her husband an honourable funeral, she herself was settled in the government of the nation, and she made her eldest son Hyrcanus high-priest.

34 *Q.* How did she administer the government under the direction of the Pharisees?

A. She immediately revoked the decree of John Hyrcanus, whereby he had abolished their traditional constitutions; by which means the Pharisees, and their traditions, grew into greater esteem and power than ever: And she permitted them to put to death many of those who advised the late king Alexander to deal so cruelly with the people; and some others of their own adversaries also were executed on this pretence, by her leave: For she dreaded a new war, and of two evils she thought to choose the least.

35 *Q.* To whom did she leave the kingdom at her death?

A. To Hyrcanus her elder son, who had been entirely bred up under the influence and tutorage of the Pharisees.

36 *Q.* Did this Hyrcanus the second continue to reign in peace?

A. Aristobulus, the younger son, finding that the army and the people were weary of the oppressive administration of the Pharisees, raised an army against his brother Hyrcanus, put him to flight, forced him to resign the kingdom and the high-priesthood, and to live a private life: Which he consented to, after he had been king three months; for he naturally loved his own ease and quiet more than any thing else.

37 *Q.* Was Aristobulus disturbed in his government?

A. There was one Antipater, an Idumean, whose father was advanced to the government of Idumea by the late king Alexander, and he himself bred up with Hyrcanus, in the court of Alexandra, prevailed upon Hyrcanus to accept of the assistance of Aretas, the Arabian king, to restore him to the kingdom; for he assured him that his life was in so great danger from his brother Aristobulus, that he could save it no other way but by dethroning him.

38 *Q.* What success had Hyrcanus in following this counsel of Antipater?

A. By the help of Aretas he gained an absolute victory over Aristobulus, drove him into the mountain of the temple, and there besieged him; where the priests stood by Aristobulus, while the people declared for Hyrcanus.

39 *Q.* What heinous murder were the people guilty of at this time?

A. There was one Onias at Jerusalem, so holy a man, that he was thought by his payers to have obtained rain from heaven in a great drought; and the people concluding that his curses would be as powerful as his prayers, pressed him to curse Aristobulus, and all that were with him. The good man finding no rest from their importunities, lift up his hands toward heaven, and prayed thus; "O Lord God, Rector of the universe, since those that are with us are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple are

thy priests, I pray that thou wouldst hear the prayers of neither of them against the other." Hereupon the multitude were so enraged, that they stoned him to death.

40 *Q.* Did Hyrcanus's party prosper after this murder?

A. Hyrcanus and his people fell under great disappointments at first; for the Romans spreading their empire far at this time, and being largely bribed by Aristobulus, they forced Aretas to raise the siege: Whereupon Aristobulus pursued and routed him in battle, and slew multitudes of Hyrcanus's party.

41 *Q.* In what manner was this contest carried on afterwards?

A. The two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, first by their ambassadors, and afterward in person, pleaded their cause before Pompey, the general of the Romans, who was now at Damascus; while, at the same time, the people declared against both; for that they pretended they were not to be governed by kings, but by the priests of God.

42 *Q.* How was the controversy decided?

A. Pompey not giving a speedy determination, and Aristobulus suspecting the event, he retired and prepared for war: Whereupon Pompey seized Aristobulus in one of his castles, confined him to prison, and laid siege to Jerusalem, and being received into the city by Hyrcanus's party, besieged also the temple and the castle Baris, and took it in three months time.

43 *Q.* How came the Romans to take so strong a place so soon?

A. Though the Jews had learned from the beginning of the Maccabean wars, to defend themselves when attacked on the sabbath; yet being not actually assaulted, they permitted the Romans to build up their works and engines on the sabbath, without disturbing them; whereby the tower or castle, and with it the temple, were taken.

44 *Q.* On what day was the temple taken?

A. On the very day which the Jews kept as a solemn fast for the taking of Jerusalem, and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar: And it is remarkable that the priests who were at the altar continued their devotions, and their rites of worship, till they perished by the hands of the enemy.

45 *Q.* What blood and plunder ensued in the temple?

A. Twelve thousand Jews were slain on this occasion, partly by Pompey's army, and partly by their own brethren, of the party of Hyrcanus. But when Pompey entered the sanctuary, he forbore to touch any of the sacred vessels thereof, or the two thousand talents which were laid up there for sacred uses; he ordered the temple to be cleansed, and sacrifice to be offered there, according to their own laws.

Note, Though Pompey was so moderate in his victory, yet in a little time after, Crassus, another Roman general, in his march through the country, seized and took away these two thousand talents, and the golden vessels of the temple, and rich hangings of inestimable worth; but the vengeance of heaven seemed to follow him: His counsels in his wars, from this time forward, were under perpetual disappointment; he was slain in a war with the Parthians; his head was cut off, and melted gold was poured down his throat by way of insult over his insatiable covetousness.

46 *Q.* What was the final effect of this victory of the Romans?

A. Pompey demolished the wall of Jerusalem, put to death some of the chief supporters of Aristobulus, restored Hyrcanus to the high-priesthood, and made him also governor, but under tribute to the Romans, and reduced his dominions to narrower

bounds: Then he carried Aristobulus, with his children, prisoners to Rome; except his eldest son, who escaped.

Note, from this quarrel between Hyrcanus the second, and Aristobulus, the ruin of Jerusalem and Judea must be dated; the final loss of the liberty of the Jews, and the translation of the sovereign authority to the Romans, which had till then descended with the priesthood, and been possessed by the Jews, though often under some tribute to heathen princes.

47 *Q.* Did Aristobulus, or his sons, ever attempt the recovery of their power and government?

A. Being escaped from prison, they made several vigorous attempts, but without success.

48 *Q.* What changes did Jerusalem pass under through these times?

A. Gabinius, a Roman general, marching through Judea, in a little time made a great change in the government, lessened the power of Hyrcanus yet further, altered the constitution of the sanhedrim or jewish senate; but all was restored again shortly afterward by Julius Cæsar: For, at Hyrcanus's request, he gave him leave to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and by a decree of the senate of Rome, the ancient friendship with the Jews was renewed.

49 *Q.* Where was Antipater all this while, who had excited Hyrcanus to recover the government of Judea?

A. He did many services for Cæsar, in his wars in the neighbouring countries; whereupon he was made his lieutenant in Judea, under Hyrcanus, who was confirmed by Cæsar in the government and high-priesthood: And, at the same time, Antipater procured Phasael, his eldest son, to be made governor of the city of Jerusalem, and Herod his second son, governor of Judea.

Note, This Herod grew up to high power afterward; he was called Herod the Great, and was king of Judea when our Saviour was born.

50 *Q.* What became of Antipater at last?

A. He was poisoned by one Malichus, a rival, who envied his greatness and power in Judea: But his death was revenged by his son Herod, who was permitted by the Roman general to procure Malichus to be murdered.

51 *Q.* What further troubles did the Jews meet with about this time?

A. Some parts or other of their nation were continually subject to plunders, sometimes from the Roman generals, for not paying the tribute demanded, or on some other pretences; sometimes by the Parthians, who assisted Antigonus, son of the late king Aristobulus to recover Jerusalem and Judea, in opposition to the united forces of Phasael, and Herod, and Hyrcanus.

52 *Q.* Did Antigonus ever recover this government?

A. The Parthian general Pacorus, who was at war with the Romans, did by mere treachery get into his custody both Hyrcanus and Phasael, seized Jerusalem, and rifled it, made Antigonus governor of Judea, and delivered up Hyrcanus and Phasael to him in chains; but Herod made his escape.

53 *Q.* What became of Phasael and Hyrcanus?

A. Phasael beat out his own brains in prison; Hyrcanus's ears were cut off, that being maimed he might be no longer a high-priest; *Lev.* xxi. 17. and he was sent afar off among the Parthians that he might raise no disturbance against Antigonus.

54 *Q.* Whither did Herod take his flight?

A. After a little time he went to Rome to represent all these transactions, and he made his complaints with great and unexpected success; for Julius Cæsar being slain in the Roman senate, Mark Antony and Octavius, who was afterward Augustus Cæsar, governed all things there, and they agreed to make Herod king of Judea, with the consent of the senate, hoping it would be for their interest in the Parthian war.

SECTION VIII.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HEROD THE GREAT, AND HIS POSTERITY, OVER THE JEWS.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT did Herod do on his receiving this new dignity?

Answer. He returning to Judea, first relieved his mother, who was put in prison by Antigonus, he made himself master of Galilee, he destroyed some large bands of robbers which infested the country thereabout, sheltering themselves in mountains, and the caves of steep and craggy rocks.

2 *Q.* What artifice did he use in order to attack them?

A. By reason of their dwelling in such hollow caves in precipices, there was no scaling them from below; and therefore to ferret them out of their dens, he made large open chests, and filled them with soldiers, which he let down into the entrances of those caves by chains from engines which he had fixed above, and thus he destroyed great numbers of them.

Note, This country was often annoyed with the remains of these plunderers in the reign of Herod; but he treated them without mercy, and all the country that sheltered them with great rigour, till he restored peace to Galilee.

3 *Q.* Where was his next march?

A. Into Judea against Antigonus, and after several battles with various success on both sides, at last, by the assistance of the Roman legions, he besieged Antigonus in Jerusalem.

4 *Q.* Did not Herod himself attend this siege?

A. Yes, but while the preparations were making for it he went to Samaria, and there married Mariamne, a lady of the family of the Maccabees or Asmoneans, the grandaughter of Hyrcanus the Second, a woman of great beauty and virtue, and admirable qualifications, hoping the Jews would more readily receive him for their king by this alliance; and having done this, he returned to the siege.

5 *Q.* Did he carry this place at last?

A. He took Jerusalem by storm, after six months hard and bloody service in the siege, at which the Romans, being enraged, ravaged the city with blood and plunder, notwithstanding all that Herod could do to prevent it; and having taken king Antigonus there, sent him to Antioch, Herod persuaded Mark Antony by a large bribe to put him to death.

Note, Here ended the reign of the Asmoneans or Maccabees, after that race had held the government one hundred and twenty years. During a great part of this time, as

well as before, the various change of these jewish governors, or the interruption by heathen conquerors, filled the country of Judea with innumerable calamities and desolations, of which Jerusalem itself had a very large share; nor did they cease in the following years.

6 *Q.* How did Herod begin his reign?

A. As he was forced to make his way to the kingdom through much blood, so he established himself by the same means, putting to death several of the partizans of Antigonus, and among them all the counsellors of the great sanhedrim, except Pollio, who is called Hillel, and Sameas, who is called Shammai; for both of them had encouraged the city to receive Herod; though it was not out of love to him, but merely on this view, that it was in vain to resist him.

Note, This Hillel and Shammai were two very great and eminent teachers among the doctors of traditions in the jewish schools.

7 *Q.* Who was made high-priest after the death of Antigonus, who was both priest and king?

A. At first Herod made one Ananelus or Ananus high-priest, who was an obscure man, but of the house of Aaron, educated among the Jews afar off in Babylonia, and therefore not so likely to oppose any of Herod's designs in Judea.

8 *Q.* Did Ananelus continue in the high-priesthood?

A. Herod's beloved wife Mariamne and her mother, being of the race of the Maccabees, were ever teazing him to make Aristobulus, Mariamne's brother, a lad of seventeen years old, high-priest in Ananelus's room, to whom indeed it rather belonged as an heir male of that family: This he at last complied with against his will, but in a very little time he procured him to be drowned, under pretence of bathing.

9 *Q.* What became of Hyrcanus all this while?

A. Though he had been banished for so many years among the Parthians and Babylonians, yet he returned to Jerusalem upon the advancement of Herod, presuming that the marriage of his grandaughter, and his own former merits toward him, would secure to himself a peaceful old age in his own country under Herod's protection.

10 *Q.* How did Herod deal with him?

A. He received him at first with all respect, but some time after found a pretence to put him to death, when he was above eighty years of age, lest one time or other, being of the family of the Maccabees or Asmoneans, he should be restored to the kingdom.

11 *Q.* Besides all these confusions, what other calamity happened to the Jews about this time?

A. A terrible earthquake ran through the whole land of Judea, and buried thirty thousand of the inhabitants in the ruin of their houses, in the seventh of Herod's reign; a grievous pestilence followed it in a little time, and a desolating famine a very few years after, at which time Herod was very liberal to the people, but he could not gain their hearty affection.

12 *Q.* Did Herod maintain his government when his great friend Mark Antony was ruined and vanquished by Octavius?

A. He took care to make early submission to Octavius, he laid aside his diadem when he waited on him, and with open heart he confessed his former friendship for Antony, but he now assured Octavius of the same faithful friendship and obedience, if

he might be trusted: Upon which Octavius, who now assumed the name of Augustus Cæsar, bid him resume his diadem, confirmed him in the kingdom, and was his friend and protector even to his death.

13 *Q.* Did he then continue to reign in perfect peace?

A. Domestic troubles broke the peace of his mind, threw him into violent grief and rage, which further soured his temper for all his life after.

14 *Q.* What were these domestic troubles?

A. He was jealous lest any man should possess so great a beauty as Mariamne his queen after his death, and lest any remains of the family of the Asmoneans should hinder the succession of his own family to the kingdom of Judea; and for these reasons he gave private orders, that in case he died, both his wife and her mother should be put to death: Which dreadful secret being communicated to his queen, she resented it to such a degree, that she would never afterwards receive him: But, notwithstanding all kind addresses and importunities, she perpetually followed him with sharp reproaches of the murder of her relations, by which he secured the crown to himself, and upbraided his mother and his sister with the meanness of their parentage. So that between his excesses of love, and rage, and jealousy, he was so tormented, and so wrought upon by the artifices of his mother and sister Salome, that at last he put his beloved Mariamne to death, under a pretence of an attempt to poison him; and he executed her mother too a little after the daughter for a real plot against his life.

15 *Q.* Did the death of Mariamne relieve him from this tumult of passions?

A. By no means; for now his love returned with violence, and his grief and vexation, joined with other passions to render him a most miserable wretch, a torment to himself, and outrageous to all about him.

16 *Q.* What course of life did he follow afterward?

A. He grew more arbitrary and cruel in his government, he put what persons he pleased into the high-priesthood, and turned them out again at pleasure: He made several innovations in the laws, customs, and religion of the Jews, and introduced spectacles of wrestlers, of combats between wild beasts and criminals, &c. in conformity to the heathens, pretending it was all necessary to please Cæsar: And this set the hearts of the Jews much more against him, who were very jealous of their religion and customs. Then thinking it needful for his defence, as well as for his grandeur and glory, he built several strong places and towers within and without Jerusalem, he raised temples in several cities, and dedicated them to Cæsar, who was his great friend; and though sometimes he remitted part of the taxes, and did several beneficent actions to ingratiate himself with the people, it was all in vain, he could not obtain their love.

17 *Q.* What was his greatest and most considerable attempt to please the people, and to perpetuate his own name?

A. He proposed to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem; for it having now stood near five hundred years, and being so often injured, broken, and repaired, he persuaded the people that a new one should be built with much more magnificence and glory.

18 *Q.* But could he persuade the Jews to consent that their temple should be demolished, in order to rebuild it?

A. Not till he had assured them that the old temple should remain untouched till all materials were ready to build the new one, which he actually provided at vast expence

and labour in two years time, by employing ten thousand artificers for work, a thousand waggons for carriage, and a thousand priests for direction.

19 *Q.* Did he fulfil his promise in building this new temple?

A. Yes, he performed the work with prodigious cost and splendour, as it is described by Josephus: It was built of large stones, each twenty-five cubits long, twelve cubits broad, and eight in thickness, which the disciples desired our Saviour to take notice of with wonder; *Mark* xiii. 1, 2. The sanctuary, that is, the holy place, and the most holy, which were more properly called the temple, were finished in a year and a half, so that divine worship was performed there, and in eight years more he completed the several walls and galleries, and pillars and courts, according to his design.

20 *Q.* How could it be said then, *John* ii. 20. "Forty and six years was this temple in building?"

A. It was begun near forty-six years before that passover, when our Saviour being near thirty-one years old, was present at Jerusalem; and though the grand design and plan was executed in nine years and a half, yet Herod and his successors were always building outworks round it, or adding new ornaments to it, even to that very day when Christ was there, and long afterward.

21 *Q.* When was it dedicated?

A. The same year when it was finished, and on the anniversary day of Herod's accession to the crown; and on this account it was celebrated with a vast number of sacrifices and universal rejoicing.

Note, Within four years after this dedication Jesus Christ our Saviour was born, and was presented there an infant according to the law.

22 *Q.* Was not this then the third temple of the Jews?

A. No, it was called the second temple still, because though it was built anew from the foundations, yet it was only by way of reparation, it not having been razed and demolished with a ruinous design, nor did it lie in ashes or desolation, as it did when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it.

23 *Q.* Did Herod do any thing after this in favour of the Jews?

A. When the Jews who were scattered throughout Greece and Asia Minor grew very numerous, and were much disturbed and oppressed by the other inhabitants, Herod procured for them a new establishment of their liberties and privileges, and permission to live in other countries according to their own laws and religion, which had been granted them before by the kings of Syria and by the Romans.

24 *Q.* What further troubles did Herod meet with in his family?

A. His two eldest sons by Mariamne, *viz.* Aristobulus and Alexander, whom he had sent to Rome for education, being returned to Jerusalem, in the heat of their youth they frequently expressed their resentments for the death of their mother, and thereby they became obnoxious to the rage of Salome, Herod's sister and favourite: And thus she who had been one great and constant instrument to blow the coals of jealousy and discontent between Herod and his queen, and at last to occasion her death, pursued the same course to make him jealous of some designs of his sons against his life.

25 *Q.* What issue had these quarrels and jealousies?

A. They continued several years: Plots were invented on both sides; these gave Herod in his old age perpetual disquietudes, suspicions, and fears: But Salome his

sister prevailed so far by her craft against his two sons, that after many accusations and acquitments of them, she at last procured their condemnation and execution by Herod's order and the consent of Augustus Cæsar. This was about a year or two before the birth of Christ.

26 *Q.* What was the general state of the heathen world about this time?

A. All the known parts of the world were subdued to the Romans, and the nations were in peace; on which account the temple of Janus was shut up at Rome, which had never been shut but five times since the first building of that city, and then Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace came into the world, and was born at Bethlehem.

27 *Q.* Wherein does it appear that the world was thus all at quiet under the government or dominion of the Romans?

A. Augustus Cæsar, the emperor of Rome, issued out a decree that year for a general register of his whole empire, which St. Luke calls a taxing or enrolling of all the world; *Luke* ii. 1. This brought Mary the mother of Christ to Bethlehem the city of David, to which family she belonged; and while she was there, she brought forth her son Jesus, as it is written; *Luke* ii. 1—11.

Note, This year in which Christ was born, according to bishop Usher's exact computation, is the four thousandth year from the creation, which falls in with an old tradition of the Jews, that the world was to last six thousand years, *viz.* two thousand years before the law, or before Abraham, who was the father of circumcision and the Jews, and two thousand under the law, that is, from Abraham to the Messiah, and two thousand under the Messiah. And here I might conclude this chapter, having brought the jewish affairs down to the birth of Christ. But it may give some light to the New Testament to carry it on a little further.

28 *Q.* What piece of cruelty was Herod guilty of, when he heard that a child was born who was to be king of the Jews?

A. He slew all the young children in Bethlehem, that he might be sure to destroy Christ, and that his own posterity might be kings of Judea.

29 *Q.* Whom did Herod design then for the successor to his kingdom?

A. Antipater, his elder son by Doris, a wife which Herod had before Mariamne; his father had raised him to some post of honour upon his displeasure with his other sons, and he had been also active and busy himself towards procuring the death of those two brothers.

30 *Q.* Did Antipater succeed his father in the kingdom, according to Herod's present design?

A. Antipater longing for the crown, and for his father's death, did really conspire to poison him, and being convicted thereof, had a sentence of condemnation passed upon him; and it being confirmed by Augustus Cæsar, was executed by his father's approbation. This was the third son whom Herod put to death.

31 *Q.* When and in what manner did Herod die?

A. In the seventieth year of his age, and five days after the execution of his son Antipater, Herod himself died by a dreadful complication of diseases. He had a slow fever, an asthma, an ulcer in his bowels and his lower parts, which bred worms and lice; he languished under extreme pain and torment till he expired, and seems to have been smitten of God in a signal and terrible manner for his cruelty, and the multiplied iniquities of his whole life.

32 *Q.* What instance of cruelty was he guilty of even at his death?

A. Knowing how much he was hated of the Jews, he concluded there would be no lamentation for him, but rather rejoicing when he died: And to prevent this, he framed a project, one of the most horrid that could enter into the heart of man; he summoned all the chief Jews over the whole kingdom, on pain of death, to appear at Jericho where he then lay; he shut them up prisoners in the Circus, or public place of shews, he ordered and adjured his sister Salome and her husband, who were his chief confidants, to send in soldiers as soon as he was dead, and put them all to the sword: "For this," said he, "will provide mourners for my funeral all the land over."

33 *Q.* Was this barbarous and bloody command executed?

A. His sister Salome, as bad as she was, chose rather to break her oath to him than execute so horrid a design, and therefore she released them all after his death.

34 *Q.* What posterity did Herod leave behind him?

A. He had nine wives, and such of his posterity as are named in scripture, are these that follow, *viz.* Archelaus his son, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Judea and Samaria; *Matt.* ii. 22. Herod Antipas, tetrarch or governor of Galilee, who cut off John the Baptist's head; *Matt.* xiv. 1, 3, 6. Philip, governor of Iturea and Trachonitis; *Luke* iii. 1. and Herod Philip, who married his own niece Herodias, and had a daughter by her called Salome, who danced well: But Herodias afterward left him to marry Herod Antipas his brother, for which John the Baptist reproved this Herod Antipas; *Luke* iii. 19. This Herodias was daughter of Herod's son Aristobulus, whom he put to death, and sister of Herod Agrippa, who slew the apostle James; *Acts* xii. 1, 2. and was afterwards smitten of God at Cæsarea; *verses* 20—23. Of this Herod Agrippa was born that king Agrippa the second, before whom Paul pleaded his cause; *Acts* xxv. and xxvi. and his two sisters were Drusilla, wife to Felix the governor; *Acts* xxiv. 24. and Bernice, who attended her brother Agrippa to hear Paul plead. This genealogy is borrowed from Dr. Prideaux.

35 *Q.* Did Archelaus continue long in his government?

A. He was guilty of many and great instances of tyranny, for which he was deposed, and banished to a town in France by the Roman emperor, when he had reigned in Judea between nine and ten years.

36 *Q.* How was Judea governed afterwards?

A. The Romans were so much displeased with the evil practices of Archelaus, that they reduced Judea to the form of a Roman province, and ruled it afterward by procurators or governors, who were sent thither, and recalled at their pleasure: The power of life and death was taken out of the hands of the Jews, and placed in the Roman governor, and their taxes were paid more directly to the Roman emperor, and gathered by the publicans.

37 *Q.* How did the Jews resent this?

A. The Pharisees, and the people under their influence, thought it unlawful to acknowledge a king who was not a Jew; *Deut.* xvii. 15. "From among thy brethren shalt thou set a king over thee." And therefore, though they were constrained to pay tribute to Cæsar, yet they scarce allowed it to be lawful: Upon this account they looked upon these publicans with greater detestation than any of the tax-gatherers in former ages, while their governor was of the jewish nation or religion.

Note, Though Herod was an Idumean by nation, yet all the Idumeans having received the jewish religion, Herod was so far counted a lawful governor, as that they did not scruple paying taxes to him.

38 *Q.* How was the high-priesthood carried on at this time?

A. As Herod had done before, so the Roman governors continued to make high-priests, and to depose them as often as they pleased, to answer their own purposes.

39 *Q.* Who was high-priest when our blessed Saviour was put to death?

A. Caiaphas, who was son-in-law to Annas, who had been himself high-priest for fifteen years, and was deposed by one of their governors.

Note, Caiaphas was not immediate successor to Annas, for there were three high-priests came between them, who had been constituted in that office, and deposed by the Romans: Hence it may come to pass, that in the history of the gospels we frequently read of several chief priests at the same time, and of Annas and Caiaphas being high-priests at the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry; *Luke* iii. 2. For, whether they had any concurring power given them by the Romans or no, yet being still alive after they had been in that office, they might have their title given them by the people, and some of them had probably considerable influence in the jewish affairs. In the case of Annas and Caiaphas, some suppose one to have been head of the sanhedrim, and to have chiefly managed in civil affairs, the other in sacred; others fancy one to have been the high-priest, and the other the deputy high-priest, or sagan, who was always ready to perform the office, if the high-priest was indisposed or hindered: And some think they might rule alternately or together by permission or appointment of the Romans; it is evident the sacred laws of Moses were not strictly observed at that time among them, nor long before.

Note, This Annas is supposed to be the same person with that Ananias, whom Paul did not seem to acknowledge for God's high-priest, when he reproved him and called him, "Thou whited wall;" *Acts* xxiii. 3—5.

40 *Q.* Who was governor of Judea at that time?

A. Pontius Pilate; for Tiberius Cæsar, who had reigned two or three years together with Augustus at Rome, and had after his death succeeded him now nineteen years in the empire, had a few years before made this Pilate governor: He was a man thoroughly prepared for all manner of iniquity, which he executed through his whole government, and gave further proof of it in that unjust sentence which he passed, even against his own conscience, for the crucifixion of our blessed Lord, at the request of the wicked Jews.

41 *Q.* What became of Pontius Pilate at last?

A. He was in a very short time recalled by the Roman emperor for misdemeanors in his government, and banished to Vienne in France, where he is reported to have put an end to his own life by the sword.

42 *Q.* Did the Jews grow wiser and better afterwards?

A. They went on by persecution and rage against the gospel of Christ, and the professors of it, and by many other crimes, to fill up the measure of their iniquities, till at last, upon their insurrection against the Romans, they were exposed to the fury of a conquering army, their city and temple were utterly destroyed, according to the prophecy of Christ, eleven hundred thousand of the people perished, and the remains of their nation have been scattered abroad through the earth unto this day.

43 *Q.* What general remark may be drawn from the whole history of the Jews since their return from the captivity of Babylon?

A. That the affairs of their church and of their state have been for the most part so unhappy, they have been so much disquieted by the invasions and persecutions of the kings of the earth, so wretchedly corrupted with the introduction of human traditions, pharisaiacal superstitions and heathenish rites among them, and so frequently and grievously oppressed by their own priests and princes, as well as strangers, that they never did enjoy so peaceful, so pious, and so flourishing a state, as to give a full accomplishment of all those glorious prophecies which relate to their return from captivity.

44 *Q.* What follows from this remark?

A. That there must be in the decrees and providence of God a further reserve of peace, holiness, and happiness for the seed of Israel, which shall be conferred upon them in the latter days: And therefore we cannot but expect a more large and general conversion of the Jews to the faith of Jesus the true Messiah, than hath ever yet appeared, with greater blessings on that people, who were once so dear to God, and are beloved for their fathers' sakes. St. Paul, in his eleventh chapter to the Romans, abundantly confirms what the prophets encourage us to hope for.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE PROPHECIES WHICH RELATE TO JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR, AND THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT; OR, A PROPHETICAL CONNEXION BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

AS I have given an historical continuation of the affairs of the Jews from the time of Nehemiah, where the Old Testament ends, to the time of Jesus Christ our Lord; so I have here inserted a chapter of some of the plainest predictions or prophecies which are found in the Old Testament that relate to the person, offices, and glories of our Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, and are fulfilled in the gospel: And it may be called, "A prophetical connexion between the Old Testament and the New."

And because I would not give offence, by introducing such prophecies as are either much doubted or denied by any christians; therefore I shall scarce mention any but what some of the writers of the New Testament either directly cite, or to which they have a plain reference in some of their expressions.

1 *Q.* Since the great subject of the New Testament is our Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel, Tell me now what are the chief discoveries or representations made of him in the Old Testament?

A. Besides the types or emblems of Christ and his gospel, which are found in the jewish worship, there are also several plain expressions in the books of the Old Testament, which are predictions or prophecies concerning him long before he came into the world. See some of the types in Chapter V. Question 116.

2 *Q.* What is the first and earliest prophecy of Christ?

A. Gen. iii. 15. "Where God said to the first woman, that is, to Eve, that her seed should bruise the head of the serpent."

3 *Q.* Wherein is this prophecy fulfilled?

A. Gal. iv. 4. "God sent forth his Son made of a woman." 1 *John* iii. 8. "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;" that is, he should destroy the mischievous designs and deeds of the devil who lay hid in the serpent, when he tempted Adam and Eve to sin: And this, in the language of prophecy, is called bruising the serpent's head.

4 *Q.* What is the next plain prophecy of Christ?

A. Gen. xviii. 18. and xxii. 18. Where God tells Abraham, "that in him and in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

5 *Q.* How does this appear to have a reference to Christ?

A. Gal. iii. 8. "The scripture preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed;" *verse* 16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: He saith, To thy seed, which is Christ;" who was to be derived in a long course of generations from Abraham, and therefore Christ may be called the son of Abraham; *Matt.* i. 1.

6 *Q.* To whom was this promise given besides Abraham?

A. It was given to Isaac the son of Abraham; *Gen.* xxvi. 4. and to Jacob his grandson, *Gen.* xxviii. 14. "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed."

7 *Q.* Did Jacob prophesy concerning Christ?

A. Yes, in his dying speech to his son Judah; *Gen.* xlix. 10. "The sceptre, or tribe, as the word signifies, shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and till the gathering of the people be unto him."

8 *Q.* How can you prove that this prophecy relates to Christ?

A. Shiloh signifies one that is sent, which is the frequent character of Christ, that he was sent by the Father; *John* x. 36—38. and xvii. 18, 21, 23. and indeed the Jews themselves own that it signifies the Messiah: Now Judah did continue to be a tribe, and to have some sort of government amongst them till Christ came: He was about ten or twelve years old when Archelaus was deposed, and Judea reduced to the form of a Roman province, and then the power of life and death was taken from them. See Chapter XIX. Question 36. And when the people, that is, the Jews and gentiles, were gathered in great numbers unto Christ, then the tribe of Judah or the jewish nation was broken to pieces and scattered, Jerusalem was destroyed, and all appearance of government amongst them was lost: Which is an effectual argument against the Jews that their Messiah is already come.

9 *Q.* Who was the next person that prophesied concerning Christ?

A. Moses in *Deut.* xviii. 15, 18. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, and to him shall ye hearken."

10 *Q.* How does it appear Moses designed Jesus Christ in this prophecy?

A. St. Stephen the martyr cites these words in his dying speech when he was put to death for the sake of Christ, and applies them to him; *Acts* vii. 37.

11 *Q.* But were not many prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Elisha, and several others like unto Moses?

A. None of them besides Jesus Christ came to institute a new religion as Moses did, or wrought such numerous and various miracles to attest their doctrine.

12 *Q.* Who was the next eminent prophet that spake plainly of Christ?

A. David speaks often of him in his book of *Psalms* in many remarkable expressions,

and describes his incarnation, his sufferings, his exaltation, and his various offices of prophet, priest, and king; *viz.*

1. His coming into the world to preach the truth of God and the doctrine of righteousness for the salvation of men, and the weakness and insufficiency of the jewish sacrifices. *Psalm* xl. 6—8. "Sacrifices and offering thou didst not desire; that is, the jewish sacrifices were not required as real and effectual expiations, because they could not take away sin. "But my ears hast thou opened: Then said I, lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation, &c." The first part of this psalm is expressly applied to Christ, *Heb.* x. 5—9. and instead of the words, "My ears hast thou opened," the apostle expresses it, "A body hast thou prepared me:" And then he goes on to shew how Christ made himself a perfect and effectual sacrifice, instead of all the imperfect sacrifices under the law.

2. His being chosen out of the jewish nation to be the Saviour and the King of Israel, is foretold under the emblem of David; *Psalm* lxxxix. 18—37. "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty: I have exalted one chosen out of the people—I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth, &c." Christ is called the first-born of the creation, and King of Kings; *Col.* i. 15. *Rev.* xix. 16.

3. The children in the temple singing his triumph when he entered into Jerusalem is early intimated; *Psalm* viii. 2. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, or perfected praise; and in *Psalm* cxviii. 25, 26. you have the very words of their song. Save now, I beseech thee; which in the Hebrew is hosanna: O Lord; blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Which is applied to Christ; *Matt.* xxi. 9. And as the Scribes and Pharisees raged and had indignation against him on this account, so this very rage is intimated in the same *Psalm* viii. 2. "The babes and sucklings cried out, and did still or silence the enemy and the avenger, that is, the revengeful enemy." And this is further hinted in *Psalm* cxviii. 22. where David calls Christ, "the stone which the builders refused, and which is become the headstone of the corner:" The teachers and rulers, or the Jews, who should have been the builders of the church, rejected Christ, and on this occasion he applies these words to himself; *Matt.* xxi. 42. and they are applied to him by the apostles Paul and Peter; *Eph.* ii. 20. "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;" and 1 *Peter* i. 7. "The stone which the builders disallowed is made the head of the corner."

4. His persecution by princes and people is declared in *Psalm* ii. 1. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, that is, against his Messiah or Christ, which was cited and fulfilled; *Acts* iv. 26, 27. "When Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the people, both gentiles and Jews, all rose up against Jesus of Nazareth, and put him to death."

5. His bitter reproaches and suffering, and the manner of his death, is foretold by David in the xxii. and lxix. *Psalms.* In the beginning of the xxii. *Psalm,* David, by way of emblem in prophecy, speaks the words of Christ upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" *verses* 16, 18. "They pierced my hands and my feet: They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture:" And that he was

brought down to the dust of death; *verse* 15. All these things were fulfilled when they nailed his hands and feet to a cross, when they cast lots for his garments, and slew him; *Matt.* xxvii. 35, 46. *John* xix. 23, 24.

His reproaches and his cruel treatment are described further; *Psalm* lxix. 20, 21. "Reproach hath broken my heart, I am full of heaviness: They gave me also gall for my meat, in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink;" *Matt.* xxvii. 48.

6. His resurrection from the dead. *Psalm* xvi. 10. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, that is, in the state of the dead, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption, that is, to lie long enough in the grave to be subject to rottenness: Thou wilt shew me the path of life." Now this was evidently fulfilled in Christ at his rising from the dead to life again before he had lain there three complete days; *Acts* ii. 31. and xiii. 33—38. 1 *Cor.* xv. 4.

7. His ascension to heaven attended with angels, his triumph over the devils, his receiving gifts from the Father, and his distribution of them to men, are foretold in *Psalm* lxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Which words are applied to our Saviour being ascended to heaven, and having led the devils captive, and bestowed gifts on men, *viz.* prophets, apostles, &c. for the ministry of the gospel, that God might dwell among men who before were rebellious against him; *Eph.* iv. 8. See also *Col.* ii. 15. he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them.

8. His exaltation to the kingdom at God's right hand, and to the priesthood of intercession is described particularly; *Psalm* cx. 1, 4. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool: And thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck;" which expressions are applied to Christ; *Matt.* xxii. 42, 44. *Acts* ii. 33—36. *Heb.* v. 6. and vii. 2, 3, 17. where Christ is exalted to be a king and a priest as Melchisedeck was, and that too a priest of constant intercession or pleading with God for men, and blessing them as Melchisedeck blessed Abraham.

9. The character of this king is described in several psalms, as in *Psalm* xlv. 6, 7. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre: Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows:" Which is a plain description of Jesus Christ; *Heb.* i. 8, 9. whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power; *Acts* x. 38. and who had the Holy Spirit without measure; *John* iii. 34. And yet further, in *Psalm* lxxii. is a large character of Christ under the emblem of Solomon: And *Psalm* lxxxix. describes Christ under the character of David himself.

10. In the second *Psalm*, his resurrection and exaltation are described under the distinct and peculiar character of the Son of God. *Verses* 6, 7. "I have set my king upon my holy hill Sion; and I will declare the decree, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:" Which is cited to prove the resurrection and advancement of Christ to the throne by the power of the Father, and as the image of the Father; he was first the King of Sion or Israel, as God is King of his church; *Acts* xiii. 33. *Heb.* v. 5. and he is now also Lord of the heathen, and King of all nations, as God is King or Ruler of all the world. The eighth verse particularly declares the submission of the heathens to Christ after he begun his work of intercession in heaven: "Ask of me, and I shall give

thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession." The next words also, *viz.* Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, are applied to Christ; *Rev.* ii. 27. and foretel his power and vengeance against his enemies.

Note 1. In some of these psalms we should not have known Christ or the Messiah was intended, if Christ himself or the apostles had not cited them for this purpose; yet some of them are so evident, that the ancient Jews applied them to the Messiah, and we cannot but apply them to him, because they could not be applied to David, or to any other person.

Note 2. There might be also many other texts cited out of the book of Psalms which are interpreted concerning Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which we should not otherwise have known to belong to him; as *Psalm* xcvii. 7. "Worship him all ye gods;" which is applied to him in *Heb.* i. 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him;" who in scripture are sometimes called gods. So *Psalm* cii. 25—27. are applied in the same chapter to Christ, and shew us that the world was created by him, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands, &c." In both which texts, as well as in several others, the very same names, characters, and actions which are attributed to Jehovah, the God of the Jews, the only true God, in the Old Testament, are applied to Jesus Christ in the New; which plainly advances his character so high, as to assure us, that he is one with the Father, that he is God manifested in the flesh, whose name is Emmanuel or God with us, as we shall learn immediately from Isaiah the prophet.

13 *Q.* We have heard various and express prophecies which David gave concerning the Messiah, and did not Solomon also prophesy of Christ?

A. Many christians in elder and later times have supposed that the eighth chapter of Solomon's Proverbs speaks of Christ in his divine nature under the character of wisdom.

Note, Some of the ancient fathers suppose wisdom, in this chapter, to denote Jesus Christ; some think it means the Holy Spirit: But other writers question whether there be any such full and sufficient proof of either of these opinions in the New Testament, as to write them down with assurance. Athanasius sometimes explains it of Christ's human nature; and on these accounts, Doctor Patrick himself doubts whether this be a prophecy of Christ or no, or whether it only relate to divine and human wisdom.

14 *Q.* But did not Solomon write the Song of Songs, and is not Christ there foretold as the bridegroom or husband of the church?

A. The metaphors and similitudes of the same kind which are used in the xlv. Psalm, and in some of the epistles, and the book of the Revelation, have generally persuaded our christian expositors to apply this Song to the spiritual characters and transactions of Christ and his church: But the expressions are so much borrowed from the affairs of a human love, that they hardly afford such sufficient argument for the proof of the Messiah as more evident and direct prophecies, which is my present chief business: Nor indeed do I know that the New Testament cites any of Solomon's writings as prophecies of Christ.

15 *Q.* Which is the next of the prophets which speak of Christ, as they stand in order in our Bible?

A. Isaiah, who was called the evangelical or gospel prophet, because he foretels the greatest variety of events that relate to him, *viz.*

1. That he shall be born of a virgin. *Isaiah* vii. 14, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel;" which was explained and accomplished when the Virgin Mary brought forth her son Jesus; *Matt.* i. 20—23. The name Emmanuel signifies, "God with us."

2. That he shall be of the family of Jesse or David, who shall be king of Israel; that his name shall be the mighty God, and his kingdom shall stand for ever. *Isaiah* xi. 10. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the gentiles seek." *Isaiah* ix. 6, 7. "Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end: Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth, even for ever."

3. And yet that he shall be rejected by many of the Jews, and should be received by the gentiles. *Isaiah* viii. 14. "He shall be for a sanctuary, that is, a refuge for mankind: But for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel;" that is, both to Judah and Benjamin, who made up the jewish nation; or to the two kingdoms both of Judah and Israel, as they were distinguished in former times. Now this text is applied to Christ; *Rom.* ix. 33. 1 *Peter* ii. 8. His rejection by the Jews is foretold also in *Isaiah* liii. 1—3. Who hath believed, &c. But that the gentiles shall receive him for a Saviour and a King, Isaiah foretels in many places; as *chap.* xlix. 6, 7. "He shall be a light to the gentiles, and salvation to the ends of the earth. To him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, that is, that nation of the Jews, kings shall look and arise; princes also shall worship." Which must refer to the kings of the heathens, for the Jews had then no kings who worshipped him. *Isaiah* xlii. 1, 6. "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles." The same is repeated in several other chapters, *Isaiah* lii. 10. and lv. 4, 5. And speaking of the Jews who rejected Christ, he saith in *chap.* lxv. 15. "Ye shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee, and shall call his servants by another name." The name of a Jew is become like a word of reproach or curse among the christians, who now are the servants of God.

4. That he shall be full of the Spirit of God, of wisdom, and knowledge, and piety, justice and goodness. *Isaiah* xi. 1, 2. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." This is fulfilled in *John* iii. 34. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit unto him by measure. *Col.* ii. 3. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." *John* i. 32. "The Spirit—abode upon him."

5. His commission for the ministry or preaching the gospel is also described by this prophet; that he should pronounce terror to the wicked, and peace to the meek, and humble, and penitent. *Isaiah* xi. 4. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked." *Isaiah* lxi. 1—3. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the

captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the L rd and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, &c." Which was evidently fulfilled in Jesus Christ, when he published pardon of sin, and everlasting life to those that repent and believe in him, and pronounced the punishments of hell upon the impenitent; and our Saviour particularly applies this prophecy to himself; *Luke* iv. 18—21.

6. That he shall work miracles of healing when he comes to be a Saviour. *Isaiah* xxxv. 4. "Behold your God will come and save you: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongne of the dumb shall sing." Which was fulfilled when our Saviour wrought these miracles not only on other occasions, but more eminently in the sight of the disciples of John the Baptist, who came to learn whether he were the Christ or no; *Matt.* xi. 2—6. And our Saviour proves it by his miracles before their eyes.

7. That he should have a forerunner to prepare his way in the wilderness. *Isaiah* xl. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;" that is, the glory of the Lord shall be made visible to fleshly eyes, by dwelling bodily, or in the body of Jesus Christ, when God shall manifest himself in the flesh; 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. And John the Baptist was his forerunner in the wilderness of Judah; *Matt.* iii. 1—3.

8. The sufferings of Christ also, and his meekness and patience under the contempt, reproaches, and persecutions he met with; his death as an atonement for sin, his being numbered among vile sinners; his burial with the rich; his resurrection, exaltation, and intercession, are all spoken of in that admirable chapter, *Isaiah* liii. which I desire my readers to peruse in this place: For the whole of it is expressed in language so exceeding plain, that it seems sufficient to convince any honest infidel or heathen; and it did actually convince that wild and atheistical nobleman, the Earl of Rochester, in the last age, of the truth of the gospel, when he compared these words of the prophecy of Isaiah with the xxvi. and following chapters of the gospel of St. Matthew; and he became a christian penitent.

16 *Q.* Did Jeremiah prophesy concerning Christ?

A. Yes, in a few places of his prophecy. *Jer.* ii. 35, 36. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." Which is repeated *Jer.* xxxiii. 14, 15. There are also some other prophecies relating to Christ and his gospel in *Jer.* xxxi. some of which are cited in the New Testament.

17 *Q.* Did Ezekiel foretel any thing concerning Christ?

A. Yes, under the character of David, the servant of God, who was both a shepherd and a king. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23, 24. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; and I will make with them a covenant of peace." *Ezek.* xxxvii. 21. "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, I will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall

be king to them all;" *verse* 24. Now Christ Jesus was this great shepherd of the people; *John* x. 1—16. and the king of Israel; *John* i. 49. and xix. 19, 21.

18 *Q.* What were the prophecies of Daniel concerning Christ?

A. Daniel describes him as the "Son of man who came with the clouds of heaven; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations should serve him; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion;" *Dan.* vii. 13, 14. Now our blessed Saviour is continually called the Son of man in the history of the gospel, and is said to come in the clouds of heaven; *Matt.* xxiv. 30. and xxvi. 64. and universal dominion is given him; *Matt.* xxviii. 18.

There is also another very remarkable account of Jesus Christ, or the Messiah, given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel; *Dan.* ix. 24, &c. that before the full end of seventy weeks, that is, seventy times seven days, which, in prophetical language, are four hundred and ninety years after the commission to Nehemiah to restore Jerusalem and the church of the Jews; the "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;" that this term of years is appointed to "finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and anoint the most holy." And after this, "the people of the prince that shall come, that is, the Romans, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." All which were fulfilled in their proper seasons by the death of Christ, his atonement for sin, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple some time after.

19 *Q.* What is the next remarkable prophecy concerning Christ in the books of scripture?

A. Micah tells us the place where Christ should be born. *Micah* v. 2. "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Which prophecy is plainly fulfilled, *Matt.* ii. 1—6. and *Luke* ii. 4, 5. when Mary, the mother of Christ, went up to Bethlehem to be taxed there, being of the family of David, together with Joseph, her husband, of the same family, and there she brought forth her son Jesus.

20 *Q.* What did Haggai foretel concerning Christ?

A. Hag. ii. 6—9. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts: And the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts." Which is naturally explained thus; he who was the desire of all nations, or who should be desired as a Saviour by the Jews and gentiles, should come, as Malachi expresses it, into his temple; *Mal.* iii. 1. And by this means, even by his own presence, should make the latter temple, which was built after the captivity, more glorious than that of Solomon; though its riches and magnificence, in all outward respects, were far inferior to Solomon's: This is the only reasonable construction that can be put upon those words.

21 *Q.* Does Zechariah tell us any thing concerning Christ?

A. Though his prophecy be generally pretty obscure, yet in several place he speaks those things which plainly relate to the Messiah; some whereof are cited and applied to Christ in the New Testament, and several of them were attributed to the Messiah by the ancient Jews. See the texts that follow.

He tells us in *chap.* vi. *verse* 12. "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch, he shall build the temple of the Lord, he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both: And they that are far off, shall come and build in the temple of the Lord." Wherein the prophet informs us, that this person, whom foregoing prophets have called, "The branch out of the root of Jesse," shall build up the church of God in the world, shall be both a priest and a king with counsels of peace; and the heathens that are afar off shall come and assist this work of building up the church.

This same prophet declares also, that Christ should come to Jerusalem as the King of Zion, meek, and bringing salvation, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass; *Zech.* ix. 10. Which was fulfilled, *Matt.* xxi. 5. and *John* xii. 15.

22 *Q.* Does this prophet say any thing concerning the remission of sins to be obtained through Jesus Christ?

A. Yes, there is a remarkable prophecy in *Zech.* xiii. 1. which must be referred to this subject: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness;" that is, by the death of Christ, and his blood making atonement for sin. And *verse* 7. his sufferings are described which should be inflicted on him, when God himself shall bruise him, and make his soul an offering for sin, as Isaiah expresses it; and that his disciples for a season should forsake him. *Zech.* xiii. 7. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." Which was fulfilled, *Matt.* xxvii. 56.

And besides all this, his sufferings from the hands of men are also described, *viz.* that he should be "sold for thirty pieces of silver," which should be "given to the potter;" *Zech.* xi. 12, 13. which the prophet speaks as personating the Messiah, as David had often done before; and it was fulfilled, *Matt.* xxvii. 9, 10. The prophet foretels also the manner of his death, *viz.* that he should be pierced, and intimates the conversion of some of those Jews who crucified him. *Zech.* xii. 10. "I will pour out on the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look on me [or him] whom they have pierced, and mourn for him." Fulfilled in *John* xix. 34, 36. when his side was pierced with a spear, and his hands and feet with nails; and *Acts* ii. 23, 36, 37, 41. when his crucifiers were converted; whereof a fuller and more glorious accomplishment is expected in the latter days among the jewish nation, who have been piercing him with reproaches almost ever since.

23 *Q.* And what does Malachi, the last of the prophets, speak concerning Christ?

A. His prophecy is expressed in pretty plain language. *Chap.* iii. 1. "Behold I will send my messenger, *viz.* John the Baptist, and he shall prepare the way before me." *Matt.* xi. 10. "And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom you delight in. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." Now this was accomplished when Christ came into the temple, and when he reformed the evil practices of the priests and people.

24 *Q.* You have given us a large account of what jewish prophets have foretold; but were there no others besides the Jews which prophesied concerning Christ?

A. Yes; there are two very remarkable persons who were not Jews, whose expressions have a reference to our blessed Saviour, and these were Balaam and Job.

25 *Q.* What did Balaam say concerning Christ?

A. "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy the children of Sheth. Seir and Edom shall be his possession; and out of Jacob shall he come who shall have dominion; *Num.* xxiv. 17—19.

26 *Q.* What reason is given to prove that this refers to Christ?

A. Christ is called the morning star, *Rev.* xxii. 16. He was of the family of Jacob or Israel; he shall smite and destroy the enemies of the church, and have the heathens for a possession, and his dominion is everlasting; *Psalm* ii. 6—9.

27 *Q.* What is the remarkable prophecy which Job spake concerning Christ?

A. Job xix. 25, 26. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

28 *Q.* When is this prophecy to be fulfilled?

A. When Christ the Redeemer, who lives in heaven, shall come to raise the dead, and to judge the world, he shall stand last upon the earth, after his enemies are conquered; and the children of God in their new-raised bodies shall see God; that is, shall see Jesus Christ the Redeemer, who is Emmanuel, or God with us; and who is described as God manifest in the flesh; 1 *Thess.* iv. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* xv. 24—26. 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

29 *Q.* What great and evident truth may be inferred from this long rank of prophecies concerning Jesus Christ our Saviour?

A. We learn that from the beginning of the world, ever since the sin and fall of Adam, throughout the several ages of mankind, there hath been a continual succession of prophecies given from God, who foreknows all things, concerning some great and glorious Deliverer and Saviour, who should be manifested to the world in time, and that he should appear as the King of Israel, and for the salvation both of Jews and gentiles. And accordingly he has been expected by those good men in the several ages who were best acquainted with the scriptures, and particularly in that age wherein Jesus Christ appeared. See *Luke* i. 69, 70. and xxiv. 27. *Acts* iii. 18—24.

30 *Q.* But does this determine Jesus, the son of Mary, to be this glorious person, this expected Saviour?

A. Since all the characters which so many prophets, in so many different ages, have given concerning the Messiah, or Christ the Saviour, do really agree and meet together in Jesus, and in none besides, they leave us no room to doubt whether this Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, be the Christ or no.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

ABRIDGED IN WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

THE INTRODUCTION.

HAVING finished the History of the Old Testament, and related in short the affairs of the Jews, so far as we find them recorded elsewhere, we proceed now to the History of the New; the chief subjects of it are our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind; John the Baptist, who was the forerunner; and the apostles, who were his followers. The history of John the Baptist is but short; it contains a brief narrative of his birth, his ministry, and his death. The history of Christ our Saviour is much larger, and it may be divided into three distinct parts; *viz.* the account of his birth and childhood; the account of his public life and ministry; and the account of his death, resurrection, and ascension. The history of the *apostles*, after our Saviour's ascension, begins with an account of the twelve apostles in general, but chiefly of St. Peter and St. John; and proceeds more largely to a particular account of the travels, labours, and sufferings of St. Paul; and this concludes the Scripture History, except what is contained in the visions of St. John in the Revelation. The writers of this history are St. Matthew, St. John the apostles; St. Mark the companion of St. Peter, and St. Luke the companion of St. Paul. It is contained chiefly in the four gospels, written by those evangelists whose names they bear; and in the Acts of the Apostles, of which Luke was the writer; though some further hints and memoirs may be collected from some parts of the epistles.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

1 QUESTION.

AS the Old Testament begins with the creation of the world, so the first question here is, who was the Saviour of the world?

Answer. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was sent down to dwell among men, in order to become their Saviour; *Matt.* i. 21. 1 *Tim.* i. 15. *John* iii. 17. 1 *John* iv. 14. *Matt.* xvi. 16.

2 *Q.* What notice was ever given of his coming?

A. God himself and his prophets, throughout all ages, have foretold his coming as some great deliverer, as the Messiah or anointed of God; *Luke* i. 70. *Acts* iii. 18.

3 *Q.* Were there any plain marks or characters given of him whereby he might be known?

A. Yes, many characters of him are found in the books of the Old Testament, as the foregoing chapter declares; and he has answered them all, both in his life, his doctrine, his death, and his resurrection.

4 *Q.* Was such a Messiah expected by the Jews, to whom the books of the Old Testament were given?

A. He was long expected by them, and particularly in that age wherein he came; and that both by the Jews and the Samaritans; *John* i. 45. *Luke* viii. 15. *John* iv. 25, 29.

Note, It is worth our observation, that not only the Jews and Samaritans, but the heathens also, about this time, expected some great king or glorious person to be born.

Virgil, the roman poet, who lived in the time of Augustus Cæsar, in his fourth eclogue, is supposed to describe the blessings of the government and age of some great person who was, or should be born about this time; and he doth it in language very agreeable to the jewish prophet's description of the Messiah, and his kingdom. Some suppose, that he borrowed this sense from some ancient books of the prophetesses, who were called sibyls; but it is evident that those writings of the sibyls which are delivered down to us, have so many signs of forgery, that we can give no great credit to them.

Suetonius, a Roman writer, tells us, in the life of Augustus Cæsar, that there was one Julius Marathus declared, that "nature was about to bring forth a king for the people of Rome:" He says also in the life of Vespasian, "that there had prevailed over all the eastern part of the world, a constant opinion that about that time there should come out of Judea, those who should obtain the empire of the world." Tacitus, another of their historians, saith the same thing, and that it was contained in the ancient books of the jewish priests; so that both Jews and gentiles expected now some glorious person to arise in the world.

5 *Q.* Who was the forerunner, or the messenger sent to declare that he was just at hand?

A. John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth; *Luke* i. 5, 76. *Mark* i. 2.

6 *Q.* What was Zacharias?

A. A good man, and a priest, who lived without a child, till his wife and he were both grown old; *Luke* i. 6, 7.

7 *Q.* What was there remarkable in the birth of John?

A. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, while he was offering incense in the temple, and the people were praying without, and told him that he should have a son, and should call his name John; *Luke* i. 9—17.

8 *Q.* What sign did the angel give of the truth of his message?

A. That Zacharias should be dumb, and not able to speak till John was born; *verse* 20.

9 *Q.* What honour was done to Elizabeth, while she was with child with her son?

A. The Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, made a visit to her, and they both rejoiced and praised God together in a divine rapture; *Luke* i. 39—55.

10 *Q.* When was Zacharias released from his dumbness, and had his voice restored to him?

A. When his wife brought forth a son, and they were going to circumcise the child, he wrote his name John on a table, and then his tongue was loosed, and he spake the praises of God; *verses* 59—64.

11 *Q.* Where was John brought up?

A. In the desert country, or wilderness of Judea, and there also he began his public ministry, when he was about thirty years of age; *verse* 80. and *Luke* iii. 2.

12 *Q.* What was his chief commission from God?

A. He was sent to preach the doctrine of repentance and forgiveness of sins; to baptize or wash with water those who professed their repentance, and to direct the people to Christ as the Saviour; *Mark* i. 4, 5. *John* i. 26, 31.

13 *Q.* What further instructions did he give to the people?

A. He bid them not trust in their being the children of Abraham, he taught them lessons of love and liberality, to give food and clothing to those who wanted, and he gave special directions to the Pharisees and Sadducees, to the publicans and the soldiers who came to be baptized; *Matt.* iii. 7, 8. *Luke* iii. 7—14.

14 *Q.* What directions did he give to the Pharisees and Sadducees?

A. He bid them bring forth fruits in their lives, to make their repentance appear, as well as profess it with their lips; *Matt.* iii. 7, 8.

15 *Q.* What advice did he give the publicans or tax-gatherers?

A. To exact or demand no more money of the people than what was appointed; *Luke* iii. 13.

16 *Q.* And what was his counsel to the soldiers?

A. To do violence or injury to none, to accuse no person falsely, and to be content with their pay; *Luke* iii. 14.

17 *Q.* What did he say concerning himself?

A. That he was not the Christ, nor the very prophet Elias risen from the dead, but that he was only come as a voice in the wilderness, to prepare the way of the Lord, according to the prophecy of Isaiah; *Luke* i. 20—23. *Isaiah* xl. 3.

18 *Q.* But does not Jesus Christ himself say that John was Elias or Elijah?

A. Yes, because he came in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for Christ, according to the sense of the prophet Malachi; *Mal.* iv. 5. *Luke* i. 17. *Matt.* xvii. 12, 13.

19 *Q.* Wherein did he imitate or look like Elias or Elijah?

A. That he wore a garment of hair; that he lived an austere life, like Elijah, in the wilderness; that he came to begin a reformation among the Jews, as Elias did, when they were greatly corrupted; and he reproved Herod, as Elias reproved Ahab; *Mark* ix. 13. and i. 6 *Matt.* xiv. 3.

20 *Q.* What did he say concerning Jesus Christ?

A. He declared, that though Jesus came after him, yet he was not worthy to bear his shoes; that he only baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire; and he pointed him out in the midst of the people, "This is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" *John* i. 29—34. *Matt.* iii. 11.

21 *Q.* How did he come to know Jesus Christ?

A. He had some notice given him privately from God, and he had a further public sign from heaven to confirm his knowledge of him.

22 *Q.* What was that public sign?

A. When Jesus was baptized by John at the river Jordan, the Holy Ghost came down like a dove, and rested upon him, as God had foretold him; *Matt.* iii. 16, 17. and *John* i. 31—33.

23 *Q.* Did the disciples of John immediately leave him, and follow Jesus?

A. No, for Jesus had not then begun his public ministry.

24 *Q.* How did John further recommend Jesus Christ to his disciples?

A. Some time after he sent them to see the miracles that Jesus wrought, that they might be convinced that he was the Messiah; *Matt.* xi. 6.

25 *Q.* What became of John the Baptist?

A. He was cast into prison by Herod, because he reproved him for taking Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; *Matt.* xiv. 3, 4.

26 *Q.* Did not Herod hear John preach sometimes, and reformed some of his evil practices upon it?

A. Yes, he did; and yet he was persuaded to put him to death at last, to satisfy the malice and revenge of this wicked woman; *Mark* vi. 20—29.

27 *Q.* How came this to pass?

A. Upon Herod's birth-day the daughter of Herodias pleased the king so well with her dancing, that he promised to give her whatever she asked; and her mother bid her ask for John the Baptist's head in a dish; *Matt.* xiv. 6—8.

28 *Q.* And did Herod then comply with this bloody request?

A. Yes, for he had sworn to it before a great deal of company, and rather than break his rash and sinful oath, he would kill a prophet of God; *Matt.* xiv. 9—11.

29 *Q.* What became of the body of John the Baptist?

A. His disciples took it up and buried it; *verse* 12.

30 *Q.* Whither did his disciples go afterward?

A. They went and told Jesus what had befallen their master, and probably they became the diciples of Jesus; *verse* 12.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Jesus Christ?

A. The Son of God, who came into this world to be the Saviour of men; 1 *John* iv. 14. *John* iii. 17.

2 *Q.* What does the name Jesus Christ signify?

A. Jesus, which is his proper name, signifies a Saviour; and Christ is the same in Greek that Messiah is in Hebrew, which signifies his being anointed, or appointed to that office; *Matt.* i. 21. *John* i. 41. *Psalm* ii. 2.

3 *Q.* Where did he dwell before he came into this world?

A. He dwelt with God his Father in a very glorious state before this world was made; *John* xvii. 5. and i. 1, 2, 14.

4 *Q.* In what manner did he come into this world?

A. He laid aside his glory, he took a body of flesh and blood, which God had prepared for him, and was born of Mary, who was a virgin according to the prophecy of Isaiah; *Phil.* ii. 7. *Heb.* ii. 14. and x. 5. *Matt.* i. 20, 23. *Isaiah* vii. 14.

5 *Q.* Who was this Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ?

A. She was a poor young woman of the family of David, who was espoused to, or had consented to marry Joseph, a carpenter, who was also of the house of David, that royal family being then fallen into decay; *Matt.* i. 18, 20. *Luke* i. 32. *Matt.* xiii. 55.

6 *Q.* Did Joseph marry her afterwards?

A. Joseph was admonished by an angel of God to marry her without fear, because the child that was formed in her was by the Spirit of God; *Matt.* i. 20.

7 *Q.* What notice had Mary that she should have such a son?

A. The angel Gabriel was sent to her at Nazareth, where she dwelt, to assure her, that the power of the Most High God should overshadow her, and that she should bring forth a child who should be called the "Son of God;" *Luke* i. 26—35.

8 Q. How was Mary further encouraged in this hope?

A. While she was with child with her son Jesus, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was then with child with John the Baptist; Elizabeth saluted her as the mother of the Messiah, and they were both inspired to praise the Lord with divine raptures; *Luke* i. 39—55.

9 *Q.* Where was Jesus Christ born?

A. In Bethlehem, the city of David, according to the prophecy of Micah; *Luke* ii. 4. *Matt.* ii. 5, 6. *Micah* v. 2.

10 *Q.* How came Mary to lie in at Bethlehem?

A. Augustus Cæsar, the emperor, had decreed to tax or register all the world; and Joseph being of the house of David, went up with Mary, his espoused wife, to be registered or taxed in Bethlehem, the city of David; *Luke* ii. 1—5.

11 *Q.* What provisions were made for her there?

A. A poor provision indeed; there was no room for them in the inn, she was lodged in a stable, and when she brought forth her son, she laid him in the manger; *Luke* ii. 7.

12 *Q.* What special notices were given that this child was the Messiah, or Christ the king of Israel?

A. Many notices were given of it by angels and men, by Jews and gentiles.

13 *Q.* What notice was given by angels that Christ was born?

A. An angel appeared to some shepherds by night, and sent them to find the babe in a manger at Bethlehem; *Luke* ii. 8—16.

14 *Q.* What joy was shewn among the angels upon this occasion?

A. A multitude of the heavenly host praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men:" And this the shepherds heard; *verses* 13, 14.

15 *Q.* What testimonies were given to Jesus Christ in his infancy by any of the Jews?

A. When he was brought to the temple to be circumcised, and presented to the Lord as the first-born, Simeon and Anna, two ancient persons among the Jews, bore witness to him; *verses* 25, 36.

16 *Q.* What was the witness which Simeon bore to the infant Jesus?

A. It was revealed to him that he should not die before he had seen the Messiah; and he took Jesus up in his arms, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" *verses* 26—30.

17 *Q.* What witness did Anna bear to him?

A. She was an aged widow, and a prophetess; she gave thanks to the Lord concerning him, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem; *verses* 36—38.

18 *Q.* Who among the gentiles received notice of the birth of Christ?

A. Some wise men in the east had seen a new star, and they had some divine notice that a king of the Jews was born, and they came to worship him; *Matt.* ii. 1, 2.

19 *Q.* How did they find out the house where Jesus was?

A. The star went before them, and stood over the place where the infant lay; *verse* 9.

20 *Q.* What honour did they do him?

A. They fell down and worshipped him, and presented him gold and spices; *verse* 11.

21 *Q.* What enemies or dangers did Jesus meet with in his infancy?

A. Herod the Great, who then reigned in Judea, having heard from the wise men, that a king of the Jews was born, was filled with jealousy, and thought to destroy Jesus; *verse* 13.

22 *Q.* What means did Herod use to destroy him?

A. He slew all the children that were in or near Bethlehem, under two years old; *verse* 15.

23 *Q.* How did the child Jesus escape?

A. Joseph, his supposed father, was warned by an angel to take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt; *verse* 13.

24 *Q.* When did Jesus return into the land of Israel?

A. When Herod was dead, God sent a message by an angel, in a dream, to command Joseph and Mary to return with him; so they returned into Galilee, and dwelt in Nazareth, their city; *verses* 19—23.

25 *Q.* Was there any thing further remarkable in the childhood of Jesus?

A. When he was twelve years old he went up with his parents to the passover, according to their custom; but when they returned, they missed their son; *Luke* ii. 41—43.

26 *Q.* Where did they find him?

A. They turned back to Jerusalem, and after three days they found him in the temple, in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions; *verses* 45, 46.

27 *Q.* What reason did the child Jesus give for his conduct?

A. He told them, that they might have supposed he was about his Father's business: But he went down with them to Nazareth, where he spent the rest of his childhood, and was subject to his parents; *Luke* ii. 49—51.

28 *Q.* How did Jesus employ his younger years?

A. It is reported by the ancients, that he was brought up to his father's trade, who was a country carpenter, and that he made ploughs and yokes for oxen; for Jesus himself is called a carpenter; *Mark* vi. 3.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE PUBLIC LIFE AND MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION.—HIS PREPARATION FOR HIS PUBLIC WORK.

1 QUESTION.

AT what age did Jesus begin to appear in public?

Answer. About thirty years of age; *Luke* iii. 23.

2 *Q.* How was he prepared for his public work?

A. He was eminently prepared for it by his baptism, by the descent of the Holy Spirit on him, by his retirement and his temptations; *Luke* iii. and iv.

3 *Q.* When was Jesus Christ baptized?

A. When John the Baptist was sent with a commission to baptize men, Jesus offered himself at the river Jordan to be baptized, that he might fulfil all righteousness, though he had no need to be washed from sin; *Matt.* iii. 14, 15.

4 *Q.* What testimony did he receive from John the Baptist?

A. John declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world; and that he himself who baptized with water was not worthy to loose the shoes of Jesus, because he was appointed to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire; *Matt.* iii. 11.

5 *Q.* What miracle attended this baptism?

A. When Jesus came from the water, the Spirit of God like a dove descended upon him, and a voice from heaven was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" *Matt.* iii. 16, 17.

6 *Q.* Whither did he go for his retirement, after he was baptized?

A. He was led into the wilderness, not only to endure temptation, and conquer the tempter there, but probably to spend forty days in meditation and prayer, and converse with God, as Moses, before his giving the laws to Israel, spent forty days with God on mount Sinai; *Mark* i. 12, 13.

7 *Q.* Was this the place of his contest with the tempter?

A. Yes, the devil assaulted him here with three powerful temptations; *Matt.* iv. 1—11.

8 *Q.* What was the first temptation?

A. The devil persuaded him to turn stones into bread, because he was a hungry, having fasted forty days.

9 *Q.* How did Christ answer him?

A. By shewing him that man doth not live by bread alone, but by the power and blessing of God; *Deut.* viii. 3.

10 *Q.* What was the second temptation?

A. The devil set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and bid him cast himself down, for there was a promise in *Psalm* xci. 11. that angels should bear him up, so that he should receive no hurt.

11 *Q.* How did Jesus resist that temptation?

A. By shewing that we must not tempt the providence of God any way, *Deut.* vi. 16. and therefore we must not venture upon dangers without necessity.

12 *Q.* What was the third temptation?

A. The devil promised to give him all the kingdoms of this world, if Jesus would fall down and worship him.

13 *Q.* How was this temptation vanquished?

A. By declaring that God only was to be worshipped; *Deut.* vi. 13. and x. 20.

14 *Q.* Whence did Jesus derive his answer to these several temptations?

A. From several texts of scripture which he cited upon this occasion, and all out of the book of Deuteronomy.

15 *Q.* What token of honour from heaven did Christ receive in the wilderness?

A. When the devil was disappointed and vanquished, and forsook him, the angels of God came and ministered unto him,

SECTION I.

JESUS CHRIST'S APPEARANCE WITH THE CHARACTERS OF THE MESSIAH.

16 *Q.* WE are come now to the public life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and let us hear what were the chief parts or designs of it?

A. The first design of his public life and ministry was to appear in the world with the marks of a divine commission, and the characters of the Messiah upon him.

17 *Q.* How did Jesus fulfil this first design of his public life and ministry?

A. He healed the sick, he raised the dead, he preached the glad tidings of salvation to the poor, he set about the reformation of the world, and all this without noise or uproar, and he received several testimonies from heaven. See these characters of the Messiah foretold by the prophets; *Isaiah* xxxv. 4, 5. and lxi. 1, 2. and xlii. 2. *Mal.* iii. 1—3. and exemplified in Christ; *Matt.* xi. 3—5. and v. 17—20. and xii. 19.

18 *Q.* But did not Christ preach up his own character as the Messiah or anointed Saviour?

A. Though he several times preached that he was sent from God, yet he very seldom declared plainly that he was the Messiah; and even forbid the men that knew it to publish it at that time, nor would he suffer the devils to declare it; *Matt.* xvi. 20. *Mark* i. 34.

19 *Q.* Why did our Saviour so long abstain from declaring that he was the Messiah, who should come into the world?

A. Partly that men might learn his office and character in a rational way, and infer that he was the Messiah by his doctrine and his works, and partly that he might not expose himself to the rage of his enemies, and to death before his time; *Luke* vii. 19—23.

20 *Q.* What were some of the testimonies which Christ received from heaven in his life?

A. Voices from heaven at several times; once at his baptism, which was mentioned before; once among the people in answer to his prayer; and once on the mount of transfiguration, when Moses and Elias came from heaven to attend him.

21 *Q.* What was that voice which came in answer to his prayer?

A. When Christ prayed in public that God his Father would glorify his name, there was an answer came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again;" *John* xii. 28.

22 *Q.* What was the transfiguration?

A. Jesus went up into a high mountain with three of his disciples, his countenance was changed all glorious, and his raiment shining like sunbeams, Moses and Elias appeared and conversed with him, and from a bright cloud broke forth a voice, "This is my beloved Son, hear him;" *Matt.* xvii. 1—5.

SECTION II.

OF THE SUBJECTS OF HIS PREACHING, HIS PARABLES, HIS DISPUTES.

23 *Q.* WHAT was the second part and design of his public life and ministry?

A. To preach and teach many necessary truths and duties to the people; *Mark* i. 38. *Isaiah* lxi. 1. *Luke* iv. 18.

24 *Q.* In what manner did our Lord Jesus Christ preach to the world and teach mankind?

A. He spake several things to them in public sermons or discourses, others in free conversation or dispute: Sometimes he spake in plain language, at other times by way of parable or similitude; *Matt.* v. 2—48. and xiii. 3.

25 *Q.* What were some of the chief subjects of our Saviour's public preaching?

A. These that follow, *viz.*

1. He explained the law of God in its full latitude, as it reaches the thoughts, as well as words and actions, and rescued it from the grievous corruptions, the false glosses and mistakes of the jewish teachers; and by this means he convinced his hearers of sin, and shewed them the need of a Saviour; *Matt.* v. 6, 7. *Matt.* ix. 12, 13.

2. He taught them the vanity of depending upon any outward privileges, as being the children of Abraham; he shewed them the danger of putting ceremonies and forms of any kind in the room of real and practical godliness; he severely reproved the Scribes and Pharisees on this account, and assured men there was no salvation for them, no entrance into heaven, without being born again, or becoming new creatures. See *John* iii. 3—8. *John* viii. 33—41. *Matt.* vii. 21—24. and viii. 12. and xxiii. 13—33.

3. He corrected several sinful customs and practices, with other foolish traditions among the people, and reproved the teachers of the law for mingling their traditions, and the inventions of men with the pure appointments of God; *Mark* vii. 1—13. *John* ii. 13—17. *Matt.* v. and vi. and vii.

4. He called the people aloud to repentance of every sin, because the kingdom of the gospel was at hand. See *Matt.* iv. 17. *Luke* v. 32.

5. He gave particular directions for the practice of many duties, *viz.* spiritual worship, prayer, dependence upon God, hearing the word, giving alms, loving our neighbours, forgiving our enemies, &c. *Matt.* v. and vi. and vii. and xiii.

6. He preached the gospel, or the glad tidings of pardoning grace to sinners, who repented of their sins, and believed in him; he promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit to them that asked it of God; he represented himself as sent of God, and invited all men to come to him and trust in him that they might be saved; *Luke* iv. 18, 21, 22. and xi. 9—13. *Matt.* v. 3—12. and vii. 7, &c. and xi. 28. *John* v. and vi. 7. and viii.

7. He revealed the things of the future and invisible world, the resurrection and the day of judgment, heaven and hell, beyond what the world had ever known before; 2 *Tim.* i. 10. *Matt.* v. 8, 12. and xiii. and xxv. &c.

8. He often foretold that the Jews would reject him and his gospel, and should be terribly punished for it: And he declared that the gentiles would receive his gospel, and said many things to prepare the way of the gentiles into the church or kingdom of the

Messiah, because the Jews had such violent prejudices against their admission into it; *Matt.* viii. 12. and xx. and xxi. *Luke* xv. *Matt.* xx. 40, 41. and xxiii. 38.

9. He several times foretold his own death, and his resurrection, and his future glory, and his coming to raise the dead, and to judge the world; *Matt.* xxi. and xxiv. and xxv. *John* v. 27—29. and xii. 23—34. *Matt.* xii. 40.

26 *Q.* Did Jesus Christ foretel all these things plainly and openly?

A. What he spake by way of prophecy in private to his disciples, he spake plainly; but what he spake of this kind in public to the multitudes, was often, though not always, delivered in parables and similitudes; *Mark* iv. 11, 32, 34. *Matt.* xx. 18—28.

27 *Q.* But did not Christ teach the great and glorious doctrine of his own death, as a sacrifice or ransom for sinful men, in the course of his public ministry?

A. He taught this privately to his disciples, to whom he spoke more freely of his death and resurrection toward the end of his life; *Matt.* xvi. 16—22. But, as for wise reasons, he did not preach publicly and plainly to the people his own death or his resurrection, so he scarce ever preached in public and in plain language, those great doctrines of christianity, that depend upon his death or his resurrection: These things were wisely reserved for the ministry of his apostles after he was actually dead and risen, and ascended to heaven, and had poured out on them the promised Spirit; *Matt.* x. 27. *Luke* xxiv. 45—49.

28 *Q.* What were some of the most remarkable among the parables of Jesus Christ?

A. The parable of the sower and the seed, of the tares in the field, of the merciless servant, of the good Samaritan, of the labourers in the vineyard, of the wicked husbandmen, of the ten virgins, of the improvement of talents, of the prodigal son, of the rich man and Lazarus the beggar.

29 *Q.* What is the parable of the sower and the seed?

A. As the seed that is sown, falling on different sorts of ground, brings forth more or less fruit, or no fruit at all; so when ministers preach the gospel the word becomes more or less fruitful, or unfruitful, according to the good or evil hearts of the hearers; *Matt.* xiii. 1—23.

30 *Q.* What is the parable of the tares in the field?

A. As the enemy had sowed tares where the husbandman had sowed wheat, and they were both suffered to grow together till the harvest, then the wheat was gathered into the barn, and the tares were burned; so the devil mingles his children with the children of God in this world, but at the day of judgment they shall be separated; the children of the devil shall be cast into a furnace of fire, and the children of God shall shine in the kingdom of their Father; *Matt.* xiii. 24—43.

31 *Q.* What means the parable of the merciless servant?

A. Though his lord forgave him ten thousand talents, yet he dealt cruelly with his fellow-servant who owed him but a hundred pence, and cast him into prison till he should pay it. When the lord heard of it, he reproved and imprisoned him till the payment of his debt: And thus the great God, who is ready to forgive us our innumerable sins, will deal with us, if we forgive not our brethren their offences against us; *Matt.* xviii. 21—35.

32 *Q.* What parable is that which is called the good Samaritan?

A. When a Jew was abused and stripped, and wounded by robbers, and left helpless, a priest and a levite passed by and neglected him, a Samaritan took care of him, and carried him to an inn for his recovery. This Jesus spake to shew that the Samaritan

treated the Jew as a neighbour ought to do, and that no differences of opinion should hinder us from actions of common humanity towards other men; *Luke* x. 30—36.

33 *Q.* What is the design of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard?

A. The labourers who were called at the eleventh hour, through the great goodness of the master, received the same reward as those who were called in at the first hour: Even so the gentiles should be called into the church in the latter days, and enjoy equal privileges with the Jews, who had been called many ages before them; *Matt.* xx. 1—16.

34 *Q.* What is the parable of the wicked husbandmen?

A. The owner of a vineyard let it out to husbandmen, and going into a far country, first sent his servants, and at last his son to receive the fruits: But they beat and slew both the servants and the son. Upon which, at the return of the owner, these husbandmen were destroyed, and the vineyard let out to others: By which our Saviour designed to shew, how the Jews brought no fruit to God, notwithstanding all their advantages, that they abused his prophets, and would slay his Son, that God would turn them out of his church, and give his gospel to the gentiles; *Matt.* xxi. 33—43.

35 *Q.* What is the parable of the ten virgins?

A. Some of these virgins were wise, and some were foolish; but they all slept while the bridegroom tarried, and at midnight when the bridegroom came, even the wise were something unprepared, but the foolish were shut out of the wedding: Whence our Saviour draws this advice, "Watch ye, for ye know not the day or hour, when the Son of Man cometh;" *Matt.* xxv. 1—13.

36 *Q.* What is the parable of the talents?

A. Those servants who were intrusted with several talents, and had improved them, were rewarded in proportion to their improvement: But he who laid up his talent in a napkin, and made no improvement of it, was cast into utter darkness, as an unprofitable servant. The plain design of this parable, is, to shew the necessity of diligence in the improvement of all our mercies and advantages; *Matt.* xxv. 14—30. *Luke* xix. 12—27.

37 *Q.* What is the parable of the prodigal son?

A. The younger son of a family grew prodigal, and wasted his estate in rioting abroad, while the elder son lived at home and served his father; but upon the return of the prodigal, and his repentance, his father received him with much compassion and joy; at which his elder brother was angry. So shall the mercy of God be shewn to the repenting gentiles, when they shall forsake their sins and return to God, though the Jews will be envious and quarrel with this conduct of providence; *Luke* xv. 11—32.

38 *Q.* What was the parable of the rich man and Lazarus?

A. The rich man who spent his days in luxury, and was cruel to the poor, died, and went to hell; but Lazarus, a beggar, was religious, and went to heaven: The rich man in his torments would fain have Lazarus sent to warn his kindred of their danger; but Abraham tells him, that if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded to leave their sins, though one rose from the dead; *Luke* xvi. 19—31.

39 *Q.* How could the hearers of Christ understand these parables?

A. There were many of them which they did not understand: But when they were retired from the multitude, Christ expounded the parables to his disciples; *Mark* iv. 9—12, 34.

40 *Q.* Besides these public sermons and parables, had not Jesus Christ some conversation and disputes with several sorts of persons?

A. Yes, he had some discourses with the multitude and with his own disciples which would be too long to repeat: And besides these, he had also some debates with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria, with the Herodians, with the Sadducees, with the Pharisees and doctors of the law, with the ruler of the synagogue, and the chief priests and elders of the people.

41 *Q.* What was his discourse with Nicodemus?

A. He taught Nicodemus, who came to him by night, that a man must be born again, that is, he must have his old sinful nature renewed into holiness, if he would see the kingdom of God; and that God sent his only-begotten Son to save as many as would believe on him; *John* iii. 1—21.

42 *Q.* What was our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria?

A. He told her of her living in the sin of fornication, and assured her the time was just at hand, when God would not regard persons ever the more on account of the places in which they worshipped him, whether it were at the temple of Jerusalem or Samaria, but on the account of the spiritual worship, which they paid him from their hearts; and he let her know plainly that he was the Messiah; *John* iv. 7—26.

43 *Q.* What discourse had Christ with the Herodians?

A. They enquired of him whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, that if he denied it, they might accuse him to the Romans; if he asserted it, they might render him odious to the Jews, and particularly the Pharisees: But Jesus gave them a very wise answer, and avoided their snares, by bidding them, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." *Matt.* xxii. 15—22.

44 *Q.* What dispute had Christ with the Sadducees?

A. The Sadducees thought to ridicule him about the doctrine of the resurrection, by enquiring, to which of her seven husbands a wife would belong in that day? But, as he proved the resurrection to them from the law of Moses, so he assured them that there was no such relation as marriage in that state; *Matt.* xxii. 23—33.

45 *Q.* What disputes did our Saviour hold with the Pharisees, and the scribes, and the teachers of the law?

A. He had many disputes with them about their excessive fondness of ceremonies and traditions, wherein he shewed that they made void the law of God by their own invented traditions; and that the duties of morality, righteousness and goodness, were more valuable even than the ceremonies of God's own appointment, and are to be preferred where they may happen to interfere: For "God will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" *Matt.* xv. 1—20. and xxiii. and xii. 1—7.

46 *Q.* What was his debate with the ruler of the synagogue and other Jews?

A. About his healing diseased persons on the sabbath-day, at which they cavilled; but he proved to them that it was a very lawful thing, even from the care that God took of cattle on the sabbath-day in the law of Moses; *Luke* xiii. 14—17.

47 *Q.* What controversy had Christ with the chief priests and elders of the people?

A. About his own authority for preaching, wherein he silenced them, by enquiring of them what authority had John the Baptist, whom all the people esteemed as a prophet; *Matt.* xxi. 23—27.

SECTION III.

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

48 *Q.* Thus we have finished the two first designs of the public life and ministry of Christ, *viz.* his appearing with the character of the Messiah upon him, and his teaching the people. What is the third considerable design of his public life and ministry?

A. To work miracles for the confirmation of his doctrine, and for the proof of his being sent from God to be the Saviour of the world.

49 *Q.* What were some of the chief of the miracles which our Saviour wrought for this purpose?

A. These that follow:

1. He turned six vessels full of water into excellent wine; *John* ii. 7—11.

2. He fed five thousand persons once with five loaves and two small fishes; and again he fed four thousand with seven loaves; and at both times there were several baskets of fragments; *Matt.* xiv. and xv.

3. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, strength and vigour to lame and withered limbs; *Mark* viii. *John* ix. *Mark* vii. *Matt.* xx. *John* v.

4. He healed the leprosy, the fever, the palsy, the dropsy, and other distempers by a word of command; *Matt.* viii. and ix. *Mark* i. *Luke* xiv.

5. He walked on the water, and suppressed a storm at sea by a reproof given to the seas and winds; *Matt.* xiv. 25. and viii. 29.

6. He delivered several persons from the possession of the devil, by rebuking the evil spirits and commanding them to depart; *Luke* iv. *Matt.* viii. *Mark* i.

7. He raised a few persons from the dead, *viz.* the ruler's daughter in the chamber, the widow's son in the street, as he was carried to his burial, and Lazarus was called out of his grave when he had been dead four days; *Mark* ix. *Luke* vii. *John* xi.

50 *Q.* What is there remarkable in these miracles of our Saviour?

A. These four things:

1. That almost every wondrous work Christ performed was a work of love and goodness, whereas many of the wonders of Moses were works of destruction.

2. His miracles were very numerous, so that mankind could not be mistaken in all of them, though they should object against some.

3. They were wrought in many places of the jewish nation, and several of them before the eyes of the multitude, who could attest them.

4. They were such miracles, as were foretold should be wrought in the days of the Messiah, and therefore he continually appeals to his miraculous works for a testimony of his commission from God; *John* x. 37, 38. and xv. 24. and xiv. 11.

SECTION IV.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

51 *Q.* LET us proceed now and enquire, What was the fourth thing designed in the public life and ministry of Christ?

A. To give an example to the world of universal holiness and goodness; *John* xiii. 15. 1 *Cor.* xi. 1. *Rom.* xv. 5.

52 *Q.* What are some of the more remarkable virtues, graces, or duties, wherein Christ appears to be our example?

A. 1. He sought the public glory of God with the warmest zeal, and vindicated the honour of his Father's appointments against the corruptions of men; *John* viii. 50. and xvii. 4. and ii. 16, 17. *Matt.* xxiii.

2. He was strictly observant of all the commands of God, even the ceremonial as well as the moral: He observed the sabbath, he came up to the feast at Jerusalem, he desired to be baptized, he came to fulfil the law of God, and made it his meat and his drink; *Matt.* iii. 15. and v. 17. *John* xiv. 31. and iv. 34. and vii. 10.

3. He was frequent and fervent in religious exersises, prayer and praise; *Luke* vi. 12. and xi. 1, 2. *Matt.* xiv. 23. and xi. 25.

4. He was eminent for heavenly-mindedness, self-denial as to the comforts of this life, and trust in God for his daily bread: He was so poor, that the good women ministered to him out of their substance, and he had not where to lay his head; *Luke* ix. 58. and viii. 3.

5. He bore sorrows from the hand of God with the highest submission, and the vilest injuries from men with perfect patience and meekness, not returning railing for railing, but blessing those that persecuted him; 1 *Peter* ii. 21—23. *Matt.* xi. 29. *Luke* xxii. 42. and xxiii. 34.

6. He gave the most glorious instances of good-will to men, compassion to the miserable, and love to friends, to strangers and to enemies. He often had pity on the multitude that followed him, he travelled about and took all occasions to do good to the bodies and the souls of men; to their bodies by his healing and feeding them, and to their souls by his preaching and conversation, and at last he laid down his life for sinners; *Acts* x. 38. *Matt.* ix. 36. and xiv. 14. *John* xv. 13. *Rom.* v. 6, 8, 10.

7. He was obedient to his parents, paying them honour, and obedient to magistrates, paying tax and tribute; *Luke* ii. 51. *Matt.* xvii. 24.

8. He was humble and familiar with the poor, and even with publicans and sinners for their good; *Matt.* xi. 29. and ix. 11. He washed the feet of his own disciples; *John* xiii. 14.

9. He was stedfast in resisting the temptations of the devil, and opposing the iniquities of men; *Matt.* iv. 1—11. *Heb.* ii. 18. and xii. 1, 2. *Matt.* xxiii. *John* ii. 13—17.

10. He was prudent and watchful against the snares of his enemies, and careful to give them no just occasions against him: This appears in the wisdom of his discourses, and his daily conduct; *John* vii. 1. and xi. 54. *Matt.* xvii. 27.

SECTION V.

HIS CALLING THE APOSTLES, AND INSTRUCTING THEM.

53 *Q.* WHAT was the fifth part of the business and design of his public ministry?

A. To call his apostles, and instruct them in their great commission of preaching the gospel.

54 *Q.* How many preachers did our Saviour send forth?

A. He first sent twelve, who were called apostles, whom he designed to make his chief ministers, and he afterward sent seventy through the land of Israel on the same errand of preaching the gospel; *Matt.* x. 1. *Luke* vi. 13. *Luke* x. 1.

55 *Q.* What was the commission that Christ gave them all?

A. To preach the gospel, to heal the sick, and to cast out devils; *Matt.* x. 1—8. *Luke* x. 9, 17.

56 *Q.* What were the names of the twelve apostles?

A. Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother, who were fishermen; James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were also fishers; Philip and Bartholomew;* Thomas, and Matthew the publican, who is also called Levi; James the son of Alpheus, who is called the Lord's brother; and Jude the brother of James, who is also called Lebbeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Canaanite, who is called Zelotes;† and Judas Iscariot, who afterward betrayed his master; *Matt.* x. 2—4. *Luke* vi. 14—16. *Gal.* i. 19.

57 *Q.* Had these messengers of Christ success in their work?

A. Yes, they had some success, for the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;" *Luke* x. 17.

58 *Q.* How did he train up his twelve apostles for their future service?

A. They were very frequently attending upon him, and dwelt much with him, before and after their first mission abroad, so that they enjoyed his private instructions, his prayers, and his example continually; *Matt.* x. 27. *Luke* xi. 1. *Mark* iv. 34.

59 *Q.* What peculiar instructions did he give his apostles?

A. 1. He explained the parables to them at home which he spake to the people, and acquainted them in private what they should preach in public; *Matt.* x. 27. *Mark* iv. 34.

2. He foretold they must expect difficulties and persecutions, but he promised the aids of his Spirit and his own presence with them, and a large reward in heaven; *Matt.* x. 16—33. *Matt.* xxviii. 20.

3. He charged them to love all men, and particularly to love one another; and not to affect dominion and authority over one another; so particularly, as if he designed to preclude the popish error of St. Peter being made prince of the apostles; *John* xiii. 34, 35. *Matt.* xx. 25.

4. If any house welcomed and received them, they were ordered to pronounce the blessing of peace upon that house; but when any town refused to receive their message,

* Some suppose Bartholomew to be the same with Nathanael.

† Simon was not a Canaanite by nation, for the apostles were all Jews: Some therefore think it is only the Hebrew or Syriac word Cana, which signifies a zealot, with a Greek termination added.

they were commanded to shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them; *Matt.* x. 11, 15. *Luke* ix. 54, 55.

5. He told them that he was the Messiah, and that he came to give his life a ransom for men, that he should be crucified and put to death at Jerusalem, and that he should rise again the third day; *Matt.* xvi. 16—22. and xx. 28.

6. He prayed with them often, and taught them how to pray both in their younger and their more advanced state of knowledge; *Luke* xi. 1, 2—4. *John* xvi. 23, 24.

7. He gave them many admirable discourses before his death, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and indulged their presence with him in his most excellent prayer to God just before his sufferings. See *Matt.* xxiv. *John* xiv. and xv. and xvi. and xvii.

8. He ordered them after his death to tarry at Jerusalem, till they should receive the promised Spirit to fit them for their further service; *Luke* xxiv. 49.

60 *Q.* Were there any of these apostles that seem to be his favourites?

A. If there were any, they were Peter, James, and John; for they were admitted to be present in the room, when he raised the ruler's daughter; and in the holy mount, when he was transfigured; and in the garden, when he sustained his agony: Besides that, John was called the beloved disciple, and leaned on Jesus's bosom at the holy supper; *Mark* v. 37, 38. *Matt.* xvii. 1. and xxvi. 37. *John* xiii. 33.

SECTION VI.

HIS APPOINTMENT OR INSTITUTION OF THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

61 *Q.* WHAT is the last part of the public ministry of Christ?

A. His appointment of the two sensible ordinances, which are called sacraments, *viz.* baptism and the Lord's-supper.

62 *Q.* When did he appoint baptism?

A. It is supposed that he confirmed and practised the baptism of John in his life-time, that is, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; but doubtless with this constant requirement, that they should believe on him as a prophet sent from God. See *Matt.* iii. 11. *Acts* xix. 4. *Matt.* iv. 17. *John* iv. 1. It may justly be doubted whether our Saviour always from the beginning required the belief and profession of him to be the Messiah, as a necessary thing in order to become one of his disciples, and to receive his baptism in those early days, since he studiously avoided the preaching up of his own character as the Messiah, and concealed it from the public notice; *Matt.* xvi. 20. But after his resurrection and new-instituted form of baptism, none were to be baptized but those who professed Jesus to be the Christ or the Messiah.

63 *Q.* Did he make any alteration in the form of baptism afterwards?

A. After his resurrection, just before his ascension to heaven, he bid his disciples, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" *Matt.* xxviii. 19.

64 *Q.* When did he appoint the Lord's-supper?

A. The same night in which he was betrayed, which was just after the feast of the passover, and a few hours before his death; 1 *Cor.* xi. 23.

65 *Q.* How did Christ appoint this ordinance to be performed?

A. Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and

said, "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you;" and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" then he said, "this do in remembrance of me;" and afterward he sung a hymn; *Matt.* xxvi. 26. 1 *Cor.* xi. 24.

66 *Q.* Do these ordinances of the gospel come in the room of any of the ceremonies of the jewish law?

A. It has been generally supposed, that baptism comes in the room of circumcision, and the Lord's-supper in the room of the passover: But the proof of this does not belong to this place.

67 *Q.* How long is the ordinance of baptism to continue?

A. Till the end of the world; for our Saviour, upon giving his apostles and ministers commission to teach and baptize, promises to be with them to the end of the world; *Matt.* xxviii. 20.

68 *Q.* How long is the ordinance of the supper to continue?

A. He not only bid them do this in remembrance of him, but St. Paul saith, "Hereby ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come:" That is, till Christ come to judge the world; 1 *Cor.* xi. 24—26.

SECTION VII.

REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

69 *Q.* WHAT other remarkable occurrences are recorded in the life of Christ besides those that have been mentioned?

A. These that follow, *viz.*

1. When Jesus Christ healed the servant of the centurion at Capernaum, he only sent a message of healing by his master, without going near him himself, to shew that he had power over diseases at a distance, and could command them to depart; *Matt.* viii. 5—13.

2. When he cast many devils out of the man of Gadara, who lived among the tombs, the devils asked leave to enter into a herd of swine; and when Jesus permitted them, they drove the herd of swine down a steep place into the sea, and drowned them: Upon which, the people desired Christ to depart out of their coasts; *Mark* v. 1—17.

3. When Jesus healed the man of the palsy at Nazareth his own city, he forgave his sins, and then cured his distemper, as a proof of his power to forgive sin; *Matt.* ix. 1—8.

4. When the woman came to be cured of her bleeding, with a strong belief of his power and mercy, she only touched the hem of his garment, and Jesus pronounced that "her faith had made her whole;" *Matt.* ix. 20—22.

5. He went through a corn-field with his disciples on the sabbath, and defended them in their plucking of ears of corn, and rubbing, and eating, from the accusation of the Pharisees, who pretended this was a breach of the sabbath; *Matt.* xii. 1—8.

6. When the Jews demanded a sign of him, he refused to give them any but the sign

of the prophet Jonah, that as Jonah was three days and nights in the whale's belly, so the Son of Man should be three days and nights in the grave; *Matt.* xii. 38—40.

7. When he was told that his mother and his brethren stood without, and wanted to speak with him, he took occasion to say, that "whosoever should do the will of his Father, were indeed his nearest relations, his brother, his sister, and his mother;" *Matt.* xiii. 46—50.

8. Though he wrought many miracles in his life, yet he wrought but few of them in his own country, because they despised him as the son of a carpenter, and would not believe on him; *Matt.* xiii. 54—58.

9. When Jesus walked upon the water towards his disciples in a storm, he called Peter out of the ship to walk upon the water too, and reproved him for his fearfulness and unbelief when he began to sink; *Matt.* xiv. 24—32.

10. He commended Peter for his confession of him as the Son of the living God, and promised to build his church upon this rock, this confession of Peter: But presently after he told his disciples of his sufferings and death, and he reproved Peter severely for wishing that Christ might not suffer and die; *Matt.* xvi. 16—23.

11. When tribute money was required of him at Capernaum, he sent Peter to catch a fish, and told him he should find money in the mouth of it, which he did, and paid it to those that gathered the tax; *Matt.* xvii. 24—27.

12. When little children were brought to him that he should touch them, his disciples rebuked those that brought them: But Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God;" *Mark* x. 13—16.

13. When a rich young man enquired of him what he should do to obtain eternal life, he tried him by saying, "Keep the commandments, or do this and live; for the man that doth them shall live by them;" as *Rom.* x. 5. But when the young man was so confident of his own righteousness, and so little sensible of his imperfections, as to reply, "All these have I kept from my youth: What do I lack more?" Our Lord then put him to a further trial, bid him sell what estate he had, give to the poor, and follow him as one of his disciples. At this the young man went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions: Whence Jesus took occasion to say, "It was hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven;" *Matt.* xix. 16—24.

14. When James and John desired to be made chief in his kingdom, and to sit on his right hand, and on his left, Jesus took occasion to suppress ambition amongst all his disciples, and said, "Whosoever will be chief amongst you, let him be your servant; as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many;" *Matt.* xx. 20—28.

15. As he was travelling from Galilee to Jerusalem, Samaria lay in his way; and when the Samaritans would not receive him, some of his disciples would call for fire from heaven upon them, as Elias did: but he severely reproved them, "that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of, for the Son of Man came to save men's lives, and not to destroy them;" *Luke* ix. 51—56.

17. When our Saviour was entertained at Bethany, he gently reproved Martha for being too much cumbered with care to entertain and feast him, and commended her sister Mary, who sat at Jesus's feet and heard his words: "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her;" *Luke* x. 38—42.

17. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he went to the grave in company with

Martha and Mary, his two sisters, and several Jews: He bid them take away the stone from the mouth of the cave, and prayed to his Father, and then commanded Lazarus to come forth, who had been dead four days; and Lazarus obeyed him, and came forth; *John* xi.

18. The Jews used to travel on foot from place to place, yet when he went up to the last feast at Jerusalem, he rode into the city upon the colt of an ass, that the prophecy of Zechariah might be fulfilled; *Zech.* ix. 9. and a great multitude attended him as in triumph, crying, Hosanna to the Son of David; so that the children learned the song, and repeated it in the temple; *Matt.* xxi. 1—6.

19. When he found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, he made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple, and overthrew the tables, with the money on them; and said, "It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." And he went out of the city, and lodged that night at Bethany; *Matt.* xxi. 12, 13, 17.

20. When he returned from Bethany the next morning, he cursed a fig-tree that had only leaves, and no fruit on it, to shew the doom of fruitless professors of religion; and presently the fig-tree withered away. This is said to be the only miracle of destruction that Jesus wrought, for all the rest were miracles of goodness; *Matt.* xxi. 17—20.

CONCLUSION OF THIS CHAPTER.

70 *Q.* After we have heard this brief account of the transactions of the life of Christ, tell me what was the sum of that religion, which Christ taught during his life?

A. It consisted chiefly in these few articles.

1. He confirmed the doctrine of the one true God, and the revelation of his mind and will to men by Moses and the prophets.

2. He explained the moral law, and enforced the observance of it for ever; and summed it up in short, in two great commandments, *viz.* "Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself."

3. He continued the observance of the ceremonial law for the present, that is, wheresoever it did not interfere with the duties of the moral law; but where it did interfere, he taught that the moral law was always to be preferred.

4. He required repentance for sin, and faith in himself, as the great prophet who came to reveal the grace of God to men, both for the pardon of sin and eternal life.

5. He appointed the profession of his religion to be made by baptism, to denote the washing away of our sins, and our being renewed to holiness by the Spirit of God.

6. Just before his sufferings and death, he appointed the feast of the Lord's-supper, as a constant memorial of his dying for the sins of men, and our partaking the benefits thereof; *Matt.* xxvi. 17—31. 1 *Cor.* x. 16, 17.

Note, This dispensation, during the life of Christ, was a medium between the jewish and christian dispensations.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.

OF HIS SUFFERINGS, AND DEATH, AND BURIAL.

1 QUESTION.

WHEN Jesus had instituted his holy supper, whither did he go?

Answer. He knew that the hour of his sufferings was at hand, and he went with his disciples into a neighbouring garden in Gethsemane, where he sustained great and grievous agonies and sorrows in his soul; *Matt.* xxvi. 38, 39.

2 *Q.* How did it appear that his anguish was so great?

A. It is written of him, "That he began to be sore amazed and very heavy, or overburdened. He told his disciples that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and under this agony or sharp conflict, his sweat was like great drops of blood falling down to the ground; *Mark* xiv. 33, 34. *Luke* xxii. 44.

3 *Q.* What was the cause of these sorrows and agonies?

A. They could not arise merely from the fears of death, or being nailed to a cross; for then he would not have been a fit example of courage and patience to his disciples and followers, some of whom have suffered the same death of the cross, without such overwhelming terrors and fears as Christ discovered: It has been generally supposed therefore, and with very good reason, that these agonies of his soul arose from a sense of the anger of God for the sins of men, some way manifested to him; perhaps also increased by the temptations of evil angels, for "it pleased God to bruise him, and make his soul an offering for sin;" *Luke* xxii. 53. *Isaiah* liii. 6, 10. and it is evident the powers of darkness were let loose upon him; *Luke* xxii. 53. *John* xiv. 30.

4 *Q.* What did Jesus do in these agonies?

A. He prayed three times earnestly that, if possible, this hour might pass from him; his innocent human nature being afraid of such sharp and smarting sorrows; yet he submitted himself to the wisdom and will of his Father; *Mark* xiv. 35, 36.

5 *Q.* What assistance had he to support him under this agony?

A. There appeared an angel from heaven, encouraging and strengthening him; *verse* 43.

6 *Q.* Where were his disciples at this time?

A. He had withdrawn to a little distance from the rest of his disciples; but Peter, James, and John, were nearest to him; *Mark* xiv. 32, 33. yet they could not help him; and indeed they fell asleep part of the time; *verse* 37.

7 *Q.* Was Judas the traitor with the rest of the disciples in the garden?

A. Judas had privately departed from them just after the passover, and having agreed with the chief priests and elders, for thirty pieces of silver, to betray him into the hands of their officers, he was now at hand with a band of men, with weapons and torches, to accomplish his design and betray his Master: *Mark* xiv. 43. *Matt.* xxvi. 14—16.

8 *Q.* How came the rulers of the Jews to be so much offended with Christ as to seek to destroy him?

A. For several reasons, *viz.*

1. Because he, being a poor man in Israel, and the supposed son of a carpenter, owned himself to be the Messiah, whom they expected to be an earthly king, and to deliver them from subjection to the Romans.

2. Because in his sermons, and in his whole conduct, he endeavoured to reform those corruptions, which the priests and teachers, and rulers of the Jews, had brought into their religion.

3. He had foretold the anger of God against them and their nation, in some of his parables pretty plainly, for their great sins, and for their rejection of his ministry.

4. They envied him, because many of the people followed him.

9 *Q.* How did Judas give notice to the officers which was Jesus?

A. He gave them a sign, that he would kiss him; and accordingly, when he came to him, he said, "Hail Master! and kissed him;" *Matt.* xxvi. 48, 49.

10 *Q.* Was there any resistance made for the relief of Christ?

A. Simon Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, the high-priest's servant; but Jesus bid him put up his sword, and he healed the man's ear with a touch; *Luke* xxii. 50, 51. *John* xviii. 10.

11 *Q.* Did Christ shew any further instance of his divine power on this occasion?

A. When they asked for Jesus, he answered, "I am he;" and they went backward, and fell to the ground; *John* xviii. 5, 6.

12 *Q.* Did they yet, after this, persist to lay hands on him?

A. Yes, they took him, and carried him away to Caiaphas the high-priest's house, where the scribes and elders were assembled; *Matt.* xxvi. 57.

13 *Q.* What became of his disciples?

A. They all forsook him and fled, as Christ foretold them they would do; *Matt.* xxvi. 31, 56.

14 *Q.* What did Peter do, who particularly boasted of his love and courage?

A. Peter followed him afar off, into the high-priest's hall, but there for fear of suffering, he shamefully denied his Lord and Master thrice, and that with swearing and cursing; *Mark* xiv. 70—72.

15 *Q.* How was Peter brought to conviction and repentance for this sin?

A. When Jesus heard Peter a little before boasting of his zeal and courage, he foretold him that he should deny him thrice before the cock crowed twice; and when Peter heard the cock crow, Jesus standing now before the high-priest, turned and looked upon him; and his heart melted within him: And he went out and wept bitterly; *Mark* xiv. 72. *Luke* xxii. 61, 62.

16 *Q.* What accusations did they bring against Christ?

A. Several false witnesses accused him about words that he spake; but they agreed not together, and therefore they could not find sufficient cause to condemn him, though they sought it earnestly; *Mark* xiv. 56.

17 *Q.* How did they condemn him at last?

A. The high-priest asked him, "Art thou the Christ the Son of God? and Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming

in the clouds of heaven." Whereupon they condemned him as worthy of death for blasphemy; *Mark* xiv. 61—64.

18 *Q.* Did they then put him to death immediately?

A. The Jews being under the government of the Romans, had not the full power of life and death in their own hands; but they shewed their spite against him by many indignities offered to him, and never left till they had procured a sentence of death against him from the Roman governor.

19 *Q.* What were these indignities?

A. They suffered their officers to mock and insult him, to smite and spit upon him, to blind his eyes and buffet him; then they bound him and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; *Mark* xiv. 65. and xv. 1.

20 *Q.* What became of Judas the traitor, when he saw the priests had condemned Christ?

A. He repented of his treachery, and brought the thirty pieces of silver to the priests; he went away and hanged himself, and falling down his body burst, and his bowels fell out; *Matt.* xxvii. 1—5. *Acts* i. 18.

21 *Q.* What did Pilate determine concerning Jesus?

A. Pilate found him to be an innocent man, and that the priests and elders had accused him out of envy, and therefore he would fain have released him; *Mark* xv. 9, 10. and *Luke* xxiii. 4.

22 *Q.* How did Pilate propose to release him when he was charged as so great a criminal by their accusations?

A. It was the custom at the passover to release some prisoner, and he offered to release Jesus to them at that season; *Mark* xv. 6—9.

23 *Q.* Did the Jews accept of Pilate's proposal?

A. No, they chose rather to have Barabbas released, who was a robber and a murderer, and demanded Jesus to be crucified; *verses* 7, 11, 13.

24 *Q.* Did Pilate yield to their demands?

A. Yes, at last he released Barabbas; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified, even against his own conscience; *verse* 15.

25 *Q.* How came Pilate to be persuaded to crucify an innocent man?

A. He did it partly to please the Jews, and partly lest he should be counted an enemy to Cæsar if he spared Christ, who did not deny himself to be a king; *Mark* xv. 15. *John* xix. 12, 13.

26 *Q.* What further indignities were cast on our Saviour?

A. They stripped him of his own clothes, they put on him a scarlet robe in mockery, because he did not deny himself to be the king of the Jews; they platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, with a reed in his right hand; they bowed the knee before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" they smote him with a reed, and spit upon him; *Mark* xv. 17—19.

27 *Q.* How did the blessed Jesus carry it under all these affronts?

A. Being reviled, he reviled not again, but stood before his accusers and his judges as an innocent lamb stands silent before the shearers; and made very few replies to all their accusations, charges, and enquiries; *Mark* xiv. 61. *Acts* viii. 32. 1 *Pet.* ii. 23.

28 *Q.* In what manner did they crucify him?

A. They put his own garments on him again, they carried him to Calvary, the place

of execution, and there they nailed him on the cross; where they also crucified two malefactors, one on his right hand, and the other on his left; *Mark* xv. 20. *Luke* xxiii. 33.

29 *Q.* Did our Saviour then make no resistance, nor give a rebuke to their wicked cruelty?

A. He only prayed for them, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" *Luke* xxiii. 34.

30 *Q.* What was the inscription set over his head?

A. This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews; and it was written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; *John* xix. 19.

31 *Q.* What affronts did he suffer on the cross?

A. When the soldiers had cast lots for his garments, the rulers mocked him, many of the Jews reviled him, and so did one of the thieves that was crucified with him; *Luke* xxiii. 34—39.

32 *Q.* How did the other thief carry it towards him?

A. He rebuked his fellow, he acknowledged his own guilt, and the innocence of Christ; he prayed that Jesus would remember him when he came into his kingdom; *Luke* xxiii. 40—42.

33 *Q.* What answer did Christ make to his faith and prayer?

A. Jesus said, "Verily, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" *verse* 43.

34 *Q.* What respect did Jesus pay to his own mother Mary, when he saw her near the cross?

A. He commended her to the care of John, his beloved disciple; and from that time John took her to his own home; *John* xix. 26, 27.

35 *Q.* What were some of the last words of Jesus on the cross?

A. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me;" And a little after he said, "It is finished;" then he cried with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit," and died immediately; *Mark* xv. 34. *Luke* xxiii. 46. *John* xix. 30.

36 *Q.* What remarkable occurrences attended the death of Christ?

A. 1. At the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole land till the ninth: That is, from noon till three o'clock in the afternoon; *Mark* xv. 33.

2. The vail of the temple, which divided the holy place from the holy of holies, was rent from the top to the bottom.

3. There was an earthquake, the rocks were rent, graves were then opened, and many of the pious dead arose after his resurrection, and appeared to several persons in Jerusalem; *Matt.* xxvii. 51—53.

4. The centurion who guarded the crucifixion of Christ, seeing these things, was constrained to confess, "Surely this man was the Son of God;" *Mark* xv. 39.

37 *Q.* What was done to the body of Jesus after his death?

A. When they broke the legs of the thieves who were crucified, that they might die the sooner, and be taken down from the cross before the sabbath, they broke not the legs of Jesus, because he was already dead; but a soldier pierced his side with a spear, and there issued blood and water; *John* xix. 31—37.

38 *Q.* How was Jesus buried?

A. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, went to Pilate, begged the body of Jesus,

wrapped it in clean linen, with spices, laid it in his own new tomb, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre; *Mark* xv. 43—46. *Luke* xxiii. 56. *John* xix. 40.

39 *Q.* What was done by the enemies of Christ to secure him from rising again?

A. The Jews desired Pilate to set a guard of soldiers about the sepulchre; and that they might know if the tomb had been opened, they sealed the stone that was rolled to the door of it; *Matt.* xxvii. 62—66.

SECTION II.

OF THE RESURRECTION AND APPEARANCES OF CHRIST.

40 *Q.* How did Jesus arise from the dead?

A. Early on the first day of the week there was a great earthquake, an angel rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it, his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; the keepers shook for fear, and Jesus rose and departed; *Matt.* xxvii. 1—4.

41 *Q.* What was the first notice the apostles of Christ had of his resurrection?

A. Early in the morning after the sabbath, some good women came to bring spices and ointments to anoint the body, and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre; and an angel told them Jesus was risen, and bid them go tell his disciples; *Mark* xvi. 1—8.

42 *Q.* Which of the apostles came to the sepulchre to examine this matter?

A. Peter and John both went to the sepulchre, and found the linen clothes and the napkin, in which the body was wrapped, and were convinced that Jesus was risen; *John* xx. 1—10.

43 *Q.* What story did the Jews tell concerning the resurrection of Christ?

A. When the guards told the chief priests what was done, the priests and elders bribed them largely to say, that while they fell asleep, his disciples came by night and stole him away; *Matt.* xxviii. 11—13.

44 *Q.* How then did the soldiers come off with the governor?

A. The priests persuaded the governor to forgive them for sleeping; *verse* 14.

45 *Q.* To whom did Jesus appear after his resurrection?

A. First to Mary Magdalene, afterwards to two disciples going to Emmaus, then to the apostles assembled, without Thomas; and all this on the day of his resurrection: Afterward he appeared to the apostles when Thomas was with them, again at the sea of Tiberias to seven of his disciples, then to eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee; then near Jerusalem, when he ascended to heaven.

46 *Q.* How long did he continue on earth after his resurrection?

A. He continued forty days, giving his disciples further instruction in the great things of the gospel, which they were not prepared to receive before his death; *Acts* i. 3. *John* xvi. 12.

47 *Q.* How did he appear to Mary Magdalene?

A. When she found not Jesus in the tomb, she turned away from the sepulchre, and she saw Jesus, but knew him not, till he called her by her name; *John* xx. 14—16.

48 *Q.* What did he say to her?

A. "Touch me not at present, but go to my brethren, and tell them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; *verse* 17.

49 *Q.* How did he appear to his two disciples going to Emmaus?

He joined himself to them as they were walking, he reproved them for their unbelief, he proved to them out of the prophets, that the Messiah was to suffer death, and to enter into glory: He went into the house and eat with them; and when they began to know him, he vanished out of their sight; *Luke* xxiv. 13—31.

50 *Q.* How did he reveal himself to the apostles when Thomas was absent the same evening?

A. When the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them; he blessed them, and gave them a commission to preach the gospel; he breathed on them, and bid them receive the Holy Ghost; *John* xx. 19—23.

51 *Q.* How did he appear to them when Thomas was with them?

A. A week after, Jesus stood in the midst of them again, when the doors were shut, and bid Thomas see and feel the marks of the nails in his hands, and of the spear in his side, and rebuked his unbelief; *John* xx. 24—27.

52 *Q.* Did Thomas confess him then?

A. Thomas, with surprize and joy acknowledged him, he broke out into a rapture of zeal and worship, and said to him, "My Lord and my God;" *verse* 28.

53 *Q.* How did he shew himself to them at the sea of Tiberias?

A. Some of them went a fishing and caught nothing all night: Jesus stood on the shore in the morning, and bid them cast the net on the right side of the ship; and they took a multitude of fishes; *John* xxi. 1—6.

54 *Q.* What remarkable occurrence happened at this meeting?

A. When they knew it was the Lord, Peter cast himself into the sea; and when they were come to shore, they eat some broiled fish, and Jesus eat with them; *John* xxi. 7, 13.

55 *Q.* How did Jesus reprove Peter for his want of love to him, and denying his master?

A. He rebuked him in a very gentle manner of speech, by asking Peter three times, whether he loved him or no; and then he foretold that Peter should love him so well, as to suffer and die for his sake; *verses* 15—19.

56 *Q.* How did he appear to them on the mountain in Galilee?

A. Jesus appointed them to meet him there; he told them that all power in heaven and earth was given into his hands, he gave them their commission to preach the gospel to all nations: and promised his presence with them, and a power to work miracles, for the vindication of their doctrine; *Matt.* xxviii. 16—20.

SECTION III.

OF HIS ASCENSION TO HEAVEN.

57 *Q.* How did he manifest himself to them near Jerusalem?

A. He met them and led them out as far as to mount Olivet, near Bethany; he bid them to tarry at Jerusalem till the promised Spirit should fall upon them; he repeated

their commission, appointed them to be witnesses for him in the world, and having blessed them, he ascended to heaven in a bright cloud; *Luke* xxiv. 49—51. *Acts* i. 4—11.

58 *Q.* Did he not appear to five hundred brethren at once?

A. St. Paul asserts it; 1 *Cor.* xv. 6. and it was neither the first nor the last time of his appearance; but when it was is uncertain; *Acts* i. 12.

59 *Q.* What notice was there given from heaven of his return again?

A. While they were gazing towards heaven, two angels appeared and assured them, that they should see him return in the same manner as he ascended; *Acts* i. 10, 11.

60 *Q.* Whither went the disciples then?

A. They worshipped Christ when he ascended to heaven, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, praising God; *Luke* xxiv. 52, 53.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, CHIEFLY PETER AND JOHN; AND THE DEACONS, STEPHEN AND PHILIP.

1 QUESTION.

WHAT was the first remarkable thing the apostles did toward their future ministry, after they returned to Jerusalem?

Answer. They chose two out of their company at Jerusalem, which was a hundred and twenty, that one of them might be an apostle and witness of the resurrection of Christ, in the room of Judas the traitor; *Acts* i. 15—22.

2 *Q.* How did they determine which of those two should be the man?

A. They called on the Lord by prayer, then cast lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, who was numbered with the eleven apostles; *Acts* i. 24—26.

3 *Q.* How long did they wait for the promised Spirit to fall upon them?

A. On the day of pentecost, which was ten days after the ascension of Christ, the Spirit of God was sent down upon them; *Acts* ii. 1—6.

4 *Q.* In what manner did the Spirit come upon them?

A. The house where they were met was filled with the sound of a rushing wind, and cloven tongues of fire appeared as sitting on all their heads; *verses* 2, 3.

5 *Q.* What was the first effect of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them?

A. They all spake with various tongues the wonderful works of God, to the amazement of the Jews, and a multitude of proselytes of all nations, that were then at Jerusalem; *verses* 4—11.

6 *Q.* Which of the apostles seemed to be the chief speaker at that time, and what was their doctrine?

A. Peter preaches to this multitude, bears witness to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit of God on men, partly from his own knowledge, and from these present visible effects thereof among them, and partly from the prophecies and promises of scripture; he leads them to Christ as a Saviour and Lord, calls them to repentance of their sins, and a profession of their faith in Jesus, by being baptized in his name; *verses* 14—41.

7 *Q.* What success had this sermon?

A. Three thousand souls were added to the disciples of Christ, and baptized on that day; *verse* 41.

8 *Q.* What was the temper of spirit which was admirable in these primitive converts?

A. A spirit of devotion toward God and Christ, with a spirit of benevolence and intimate friendship toward each other; so far, that they were daily in the temple praising God, they were most frequently or rather continually engaged in prayer, and in remembering the death of Christ, by breaking bread with joy; and they so liberally distributed to the poor, that none was in want. These were the glorious effects of christianity in its first appearance; *verses* 42—47.

9 *Q.* How did the apostles effectually prove their doctrine and their commission to preach?

A. By doing many signs and wonders among the people, which were the gifts of the Spirit, proceeding from a risen Saviour; *verses* 33, 43.

Note, This was the proper beginning of the kingdom of Christ; or the christian dispensation; which was set up in the world in its glory, at the pouring down of the Spirit, after the ascension of Christ, and his exaltation to the government of the world and the church.

10 *Q.* What remarkable miracle was wrought by Peter and John at the temple-gate?

A. A beggar that was born a cripple received the use of his limbs, when they bid him rise up and walk, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth; *Acts* iii. 1—9.

11 *Q.* What use was made of this miracle?

A. Peter took occasion from it to preach up this new doctrine, *viz.* the resurrection of Christ, and salvation in his name, citing the ancient prophets to confirm it; *Acts* iii. 12—26.

12 *Q.* What was the effect of this sermon?

A. Five thousand were converted by it to the faith of Christ, but the priests and rulers put the apostles in prison; *Acts* iv. 1—4.

13 *Q.* What defence did the apostles make, when they were brought the next day before the priests and rulers?

A. They took courage again, and preached to this court the doctrine of the gospel of Christ; and silenced their enemies, by having the cripple that was healed stand among them; *verses* 5—14.

14 *Q.* What became of them after this their defence?

A. They were dismissed, and charged to preach no more in the name of Jesus; but Peter and John declared they would obey God rather than man; *verses* 15—20.

15 *Q.* Whither went the apostles after their discharge?

A. They went to their own company, and gave glory to God in prayer and praise; and their whole assembly was filled with the Holy Ghost; and boldly spake the word of God; *verses* 23—31.

16 *Q.* What remarkable instance of goodness and compassion was practised by these first believers?

A. The souls of all of them were so united in love to Christ, and one another, that they sold their possessions and goods, and threw all into a common stock, which the apostles divided to every man according to his need; *Acts* iii. 44, 45. and iv. 32—35.

17 *Q.* Were they all faithful and honest in bringing the price of their estates to the joint-stock?

A. There was one Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, who sold a possession, and secretly withheld part of the money, though they declared they had paid it in all; *Acts* v. 1, 2.

18 *Q.* Did they meet with any punishment for this their hypocrisy and deceit?

A. Peter charged them with lying to the Holy Ghost, and struck them both dead with his word; *verses* 3—10.

19 *Q.* What effect had this upon the multitude?

A. It discouraged others that were in the church from practising the like deceit, and frighted hypocrites from coming into the church, merely in hopes of a maintenance; *verse* 11.

20 *Q.* What other miracles were wrought by the apostles?

A. Multitudes of sick were healed, and those that were possessed with devils were relieved, both in Jerusalem, and the cities round about; *verses* 15, 16.

21 *Q.* Did the high-priests and rulers let the apostles go on at this rate?

A. They again put them in prison, but the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison-doors, and sent them again to preach this gospel; *verses* 17—21.

22 *Q.* When they were brought again before the rulers, how did they behave themselves?

A. They charged the rulers with putting Christ to death, and declared they were witnesses of his resurrection; and that God had exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins; *verses* 29—32.

32 *Q.* What effect had this speech upon the rulers and elders?

A. At the advice of Gamaliel, who doubted whether the hand of God was not with the apostles, they dismissed them again; but they beat them first, and again commanded them to preach Jesus Christ no more; *verses* 33—42.

24 *Q.* When there were such multitudes of converts, how could the apostles both preach the gospel, and distribute the money to the poor?

A. The apostles were sensible that the labour was too much for them, and therefore they bid the disciples choose out seven men, who were afterwards called deacons, to take care of the poor, that they might more constantly be engaged in preaching and prayer; *Acts* v. 1—5.

25 *Q.* How did the apostles separate those whom the people chose to this office of a deacon?

A. They prayed, and laid their hands on them; *verse* 6.

26 *Q.* Who were the most considerable of these seven men?

A. Stephen and Philip, who were full of faith and zeal, and had great gifts communicated to them.

27 *Q.* What is related concerning Stephen?

A. He wrought wonders, and no doubt he preached the word with power, till he was accused to the council for blasphemy against God and Moses; *verses* 8—15.

28 *Q.* How did Stephen defend himself?

A. By a long rehearsal of their ancient histories, he charged them and their fathers with resisting the Holy Spirit, with killing the prophets, and with breaking the law of God, and upbraided them at last with the murder of Christ; *Acts* vii. 1—53.

29 *Q.* What did they do with Stephen after so bold a speech?

A. When he told them further, that he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, they cried out against him as a blasphemer, with a loud voice; they cast him out of the city, and stoned him; *verses* 54—58.

30 *Q.* How did Stephen behave at his death?

A. He being the first martyr for Christ, gave a glorious instance of faith and love.

31 *Q.* Wherein did his faith appear?

A. At his death he prayed, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" *verse* 59.

32 *Q.* How did he manifest his love?

A. He prayed for his enemies, and said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" *verse* 60.

33 *Q.* What is recorded concerning Philip the deacon?

A. He went down to Samaria, and preached Christ among them, and healed the sick, and cast out devils; *Acts* viii. 5—7.

34 *Q.* Did he make any converts there?

A. Yes, many of the Samaritans believed in Christ, and were baptized, and amongst the rest, one Simon, a sorcerer, was baptized, who is commonly called Simon Magus; *verses* 9—13.

35 *Q.* Did these believers at Samaria receive the Holy Spirit also?

A. Peter and John the apostles came down on purpose from Jerusalem, and laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit; *verses* 14—17.

Note, this makes it evident that Philip, who preached to the Samaritans, was not the apostle, but the deacon; for had he been the apostle, there would have been no need for Peter and John to come from Jerusalem to lay hands on those that believed.

36 *Q.* How did Simon Magus betray his own hypocrisy and falsehood?

A. He offered them money, that he might have power to communicate the Holy Ghost to others by laying on his hands; *verses* 18, 19.

37 *Q.* How was he reproved for this his rashness and folly?

A. Peter said to him, "Thy money perish with thee! thou hast no part with us in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God;" *verses* 20, 21.

38 *Q.* Whither was Philip sent next to preach?

A. The angel of the Lord sent him to meet a great officer of the queen of Ethiopia upon the road, as he was returning from Jerusalem where he had been to worship as a proselyte; *verses* 26, 27.

39 *Q.* How was he employed when Philip met him?

A. He was sitting in his chariot, and reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, where it is written, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, &c." *verses* 28—32.

40 *Q.* In what manner did Philip preach the gospel to him?

A. Upon his enquiry, "Who was the person of whom the prophet spake?" Philip preached Jesus Christ the Saviour to him; *verses* 34, 35.

41 *Q.* What success had this discourse of Philip?

A. He professed his faith that Jesus is the Son of God, and was baptized as soon as they came to any water; *verses* 36—38.

42 *Q.* What became of Philip afterward?

A. The Spirit of the Lord caught him away, and carried him to Azotus; whence he travelled to Cesarea, and preached to all the cities upon the road; *verses* 39, 40.

43 *Q.* What are the next remarkable actions of Peter?

A. He went down to Lydda, and cured Eneas, who had kept his bed eight years with the palsy; and he went to Joppa, and raised Dorcas from the dead; *Acts* ix. 32—41.

44 *Q.* Who was this Dorcas?

A. She was a woman full of good works, and who made garments for the poor; *verses* 36—39.

45 *Q.* What was the effect of these miracles?

A. Many at Lydda and Joppa believed and turned to the Lord; *verses* 35, 42.

46 *Q.* What message did Peter receive while he was at Joppa?

A. Cornelius, a centurion, that feared God and prayed to him daily, was ordered by an angel in a vision, to send to Joppa for Peter, that he might teach him the way of salvation; *Acts* x. 1—6.

47 *Q.* Did Peter readily go upon this message, and preach to Cornelius, who was one of the gentiles?

A. Peter being a Jew, would have thought it unlawful to keep company with the gentiles; that is, to go and sojourn, and eat with them in a familiar manner, as thinking them unclean: But God forewarned him in a vision, just before the messengers came to him, that he should freely go and preach to the gentiles who sent for him; *verses* 19, 20, 28, 29.

48 *Q.* What sort of vision was this, whereby God forewarned Peter, that the gentiles should not be judged unclean any longer?

A. While the messengers of Cornelius drew near the city, Peter went upon the house-top to pray; and there was a great sheet appeared to be let down from heaven, with all manner of unclean beasts and birds, and creeping things; and a voice bid Peter kill and eat, nor call those things unclean which God had cleansed; *verses* 9, 20.

Note, By this vision Peter seems to have been taught these two things at once; *viz.* He was taught literally and expressly, that there were no more jewish distinctions of meats to be observed; and he was taught by way of emblem, that the gentiles should no longer be counted unclean, or unfit for Jews familiarly to eat and converse with.

49 *Q.* How did Peter begin his sermon to Cornelius and his friends?

A. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him;" *verses* 34, 35.

50 *Q.* What was the chief substance of his discourse?

A. He preached the life and death, and resurrection of Christ; and that he was ordained to be the Judge of the world, and that whosoever believeth in him, should have remission of sins; *verses* 36—43.

51 *Q.* Had this sermon of Peter any remarkable success?

A. While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all that were present; and they spake with tongues, and were baptized in the name of the Lord; *verses* 44—48.

52 *Q.* How did Peter defend himself for conversing and eating with the gentiles, when the jewish believers reproved him for it?

A. Peter related the whole story, both of his own vision upon the house-top, and of the angel that was sent to Cornelius, and the wonderful success of his sermon; upon which they held their peace, and glorified God; *Acts* xi. 1—18.

53 *Q.* Were the disciples of Christ free from persecution at this time?

A. They had been free from persecution for a considerable time in Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, till Herod killed James, the brother of John, with the sword, and put Peter in prison; *Acts* ix. 31. and xii. 1—4.

54 *Q.* How did Peter escape from his hands?

A. Prayer was made by the church, without ceasing, for him; and while he was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the centinels kept the prison-door, at night a light shone in the prison, and the angel of the Lord awakened him, the chains fell from his hands, the gates opened of their own accord, and the angel brought him into the street, and departed; *Acts* xii. 5—10.

55 *Q.* Whither went Peter after his release from prison?

A. To the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, where the disciples were met together for prayer, and he ordered them to acquaint the brethren of his miraculous deliverance; *verses* 12—17.

56 *Q.* How did Herod shew his rage for his disappointment?

A. He commanded the keepers of the prison to be put to death, being exceedingly vexed that Peter had escaped his hands; *verse* 19.

57 *Q.* What remarkable judgment of God fell upon Herod?

A. Upon a special occasion, sitting on his throne in his royal robes, he made a speech to the people, upon which they cried out, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man;" and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and died; *verses* 21—23.

58 *Q.* What further account is there given of Peter in scripture?

A. He preached the gospel to the world, he encouraged the receiving the gentiles into the church without circumcision, by his own example, he wrote letters to encourage the believers under persecution, till at last he was crucified, as Christ had foretold him; *Acts* xv. 7—11. first and second epistles of *Peter*; *John* xxi. 18, 19. 2 *Pet.* i. 13—15.

59 *Q.* Is there any thing else recorded concerning the apostle John?

A. He also preached the word, and wrote the history of the life and death of Christ, which is called his gospel; he wrote several epistles to the christians, he was banished to the isle of Patmos for the sake of Christ, where he wrote the book of the *Revelation*: In what order he wrote these things, does not appear from scripture.

60 *Q.* You have informed us what were the doctrines, and what was the religion that the apostles and disciples taught after Christ went to heaven: But how comes it to pass, that among these doctrines, we do not find them insisting, more expressly, on that great article of the gospel, the redemption by Christ's death, and the atonement made for sin, by his sufferings?

A. It is sufficiently evident, that this doctrine was taught the world by Peter and John, as well as by Paul, since there is frequent mention of it in their epistles, as well as it shines every where through the epistles of St. Paul: Nor can we suppose their preaching utterly forgot or neglected what their writings abound with; 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. and ii. 24. and iii. 18. and iv. 1. 1 *John* i. 7. and ii. 2. and iii. 16. and v. 6. and therefore it is possible they might preach it sometimes at first, though it be not expressly recorded in such short abstracts of their sermons, as we find in the book of *Acts*.

Or, if this doctrine was not published at first, with frequency and freedom, there seems to be a very good reason for it, *viz.* because neither the Jews nor gentiles could well bear it so soon; for it was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the

Greeks; 1 *Cor.* i. 23. And they were to be led by degrees into a full acquaintance with the mystery of the gospel, even as Christ himself led his own disciples by slow degrees into the knowledge of this and other things, as they were able to bear them; *John* xvi. 12.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ACTS OF PAUL THE APOSTLE, HIS TRAVELS AND SUFFERINGS, HIS LIFE AND DEATH.

1 QUESTION.

WHO was Paul?

Answer. He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, born at Tarsus; his name at first was Saul, he was brought up in the strict sect of the Pharisees, a man of good morals, and exceeding zealous of the traditions of the fathers; *Acts* xiii. 9. and xxi. 39. *Phil.* iii. 5, 6. *Gal.* i. 14. *Acts* vii. 58.

2 *Q.* What was his behaviour towards the christians while he continued a Pharisee?

A. He was a very great persecutor in his younger years, he made havock of the church every where, sending men and women to prison, and he encouraged those who stoned Stephen; *Acts* viii. 1, 3. and vii. 58.

3 *Q.* How came he to become a christian?

A. As he was going to Damascus with orders from the high-priest, to bring all the christians he could find there bound to Jerusalem, he was struck down on the road by a blaze of light from heaven; *Acts* ix. 1—3.

4 *Q.* Did he hear any voice at the same time?

A. A voice from heaven said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest?" *verses* 4, 5.

5 *Q.* What effect had this upon Saul?

A. He trembled and cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the Lord bid him arise, and go to the city of Damascus, and there he should be told his duty; *verse* 6

6 *Q.* Did Saul obey this divine vision?

A. He rose from the earth, and found that he was struck blind, and he was led by the hand into Damascus, where he was three days without sight and without food, and engaged much in prayer; *verses* 8—11.

7 *Q.* Who was sent to teach him his duty there?

A. Ananias a disciple was ordered by the Lord in a vision to go to him in the house where he lodged, and to restore his eye-sight; *verses* 11, 12. and to tell him what honour and duty God had appointed for him.

8 *Q.* Did Ananias go willingly on this errand?

A. He was at first afraid to go, because he had heard of his cruel persecution of the christians; but the Lord assured him that Saul would receive him, because he had given Saul also a vision of one Ananias, to prepare him for his coming; *verses* 10—17.

9 *Q.* How did Saul recover his sight?

A. Ananias laid his hands upon him, and he received his sight, and was filled with the Holy Ghost, and was baptized; *verses* 17, 18.

10 *Q.* Who appointed Saul at first to be a preacher?

A. The Lord Jesus ordered Ananias to tell him, that God had chosen him to know his

will, to see Jesus, and to be a witness for Christ to the world; *Acts* xxii. 14—16. And some time after that, Christ himself in another vision sent him to preach to the heathen nations; *verse* 21.

Note here, in St. Paul's rehearsal of this matter to Agrippa, *Acts* xxvi. 16—20. Christ himself is represented as giving St. Paul his first commission from heaven to the gentiles at this time: Yet it has been questioned whether the apostle does not, in this rehearsal, join together all that Christ said to him, both in his first vision upon the road to Damascus, and his second vision at Jerusalem in the temple, when he was more expressly sent to the gentiles; *Acts* xxii. 17, 18, 21. But this is too large a debate to be assumed here.

11 *Q.* How did Saul employ himself after this wonderful appearance?

A. He was a few days with the disciples at Damascus, and he soon preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God, to the amazement of them that heard him; *verses* 19—22.

12 *Q.* How came he to learn and preach the gospel so soon?

A. It is generally supposed, that he was taught the gospel by Jesus Christ himself in three days of his blindness, for he declares he learned it not from men; *Gal.* i. 1, 11—16.

13 *Q.* Where did he preach the gospel when he went from Damascus?

A. In Arabia, and he returned again to Damascus, and did not go up to the apostles at Jerusalem till three years after; *Gal.* i. 17, 18.

14 *Q.* When he returned to Damascus how did the Jews bear with him?

A. They watched the gates night and day to slay him, but the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket; *Acts* ix. 23—25. and 2 *Cor.* xi. 32, 33.

15 *Q.* When he came to Jerusalem how was he received by the disciples?

A. They were all afraid of him, because he had been so great a persecutor of the christians but a very few years before; *verse* 26.

16 *Q.* How were they persuaded to believe that he was now a disciple of Christ?

A. Barnabas brought him to the apostles, and gave an account of Christ's calling him from heaven, and his preaching boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus; *verses* 26, 27.

17 *Q.* Who was Barnabas?

A. A levite of Cyprus whose name was Joses, who was a zealous disciple of Christ, and a preacher of the gospel, whom the apostles surnamed Barnabas, that is, the son of consolation; *Acts* iv. 36.

18 *Q.* Did Saul preach Christ at Jerusalem?

A. Yes, with great courage; but the Grecians, that is, the Hellenists or Grecian Jews, sought to slay him, and then the brethren persuaded him to retire to his native place, Tarsus in Cilicia; *Acts* ix. 28—30.

19 *Q.* What was that other vision which he had of Christ when he was at Jerusalem?

A. As he was praying in the temple he saw the Lord, who assured him that the Jews would not receive his witness concerning him, and bid him depart from Jerusalem, for that he would send him to the gentiles; *Acts* xxii. 17—21.

Though this account of Paul's seeing Christ in the temple at Jerusalem seems here immediately to follow the account of his conversion. *Acts* xxii. 16, 17. yet some think he had not this vision till the second time of his coming to Jerusalem.

20 *Q.* Whither was Barnabas sent by the apostles?

A. When they heard of the great success of the gospel in foreign countries, they sent him as far as Antioch in Syria, to confirm the disciples; *Acts* xi. 22—24.

Note, This great success of the gospel at this time was partly among the Jews, who resided in other countries, and partly the jewish proselytes of the gate, or the devout persons, and such as feared God; *Acts* x. 17. and xiii. 16, 50.

21 *Q.* Whither did Barnabas go when he left Antioch?

A. He went to Tarsus to seek Saul, and brought him to Antioch, where they spent a whole year together, and there the disciples were first called christians; *Acts* xi. 25, 26.

22 *Q.* What further commission had Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel to the gentiles?

A. The Holy Spirit appointed the prophets and teachers at Antioch to separate Barnabas and Saul to the work to which he had called them, that is, to preach to the idolatrous gentiles, which they did by fasting, prayer, and laying on their hands; *Acts* xiii. 1—3.

23 *Q.* Who was their assistant or attendant in this journey?

A. John Mark, nephew to Barnabas; *Acts* xii. 25. and xiii. 5. *Col.* iv. 10.

24 *Q.* What opposition did they meet with, when they came to Paphos in Cyprus?

A. When Sergius Paulus, the governor of the country, sent for them that he might hear the word of God, Elymas a Jew, who was a false prophet and a sorcerer, withstood them, in order to prevent the governor from believing; *verses* 6—8.

25 *Q.* How was Elymas punished for this crime?

A. Saul, who from this time is called Paul in scripture, struck him blind with his word, upon which the governor believed in Christ; *verses* 10—12.

Note, From Paphos they went to Pamphylia in Asia, and there John Mark returned to Jerusalem, and left Paul and Barnabas; *verse* 13.

26 *Q.* Where were the next remarkable labours of Paul and Barnabas?

A. Paul preached in the synagogue of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, where he proved Jesus to be the promised Saviour, and published his death and resurrection, and forgiveness of sins through his name; *Acts* xiii. 14—41.

27 *Q.* What effect had Paul's preaching upon the inhabitants of that city?

A. Many of the Jews, filled with envy, contradicted the words of Paul, and blasphemed Christ; upon which Paul declared, that since the Jews rejected the gospel, they would turn to the gentiles, according to the command of the Lord; *verses* 45—47.

28 *Q.* Did the gentiles receive the gospel there?

A. Many of them believed the word of the Lord, which seems to be the first very remarkable conversion of the idolatrous gentiles: But the Jews prevailed so far as to drive Paul and Barnabas out of their coasts, who shook off the dust of their feet against them, according to the command of Christ; *verses* 48—51. *Matt.* x. 14.

29 *Q.* Whither did Barnabas and Paul travel next?

A. They went to Iconium, and preached the gospel with some success there, both among the Jews and gentiles: Till being in danger of stoning, they fled to Lystra; *Acts* xiv. 1—6.

30 *Q.* What remarkable occurrence fell out at Lystra?

A. A man that was born a cripple hearing Paul preach, was healed by Paul, and he leaped and walked; *verses* 8—10.

31 *Q.* How did this miracle affect the people?

A. They supposed Barnabas and Paul to be two of their gods, *viz.* Jupiter and Mercury, who were come down in the likeness of men; and Barnabas and Paul had much ado to hinder the people from offering sacrifice to them; *verses* 8—18.

32 *Q.* Did the people continue in this mind?

A. They were so changeable, that by the persuasion of certain wicked Jews, they quickly stoned Paul, and left him for dead; *verse* 19.

33 *Q.* How did Paul escape thence?

A. When his enemies were gone, he rose up, and went with Barnabas through many cities where they had preached the gospel, to confirm the disciples; and then they returned to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had been sent forth, and recommended to the grace of God; *verses* 20—27.

34 *Q.* What new troubles arose while they were at Antioch?

A. Some jewish christians coming from Judea, taught the brethren that they could not be saved, unless they were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses; *Acts* xv. 1.

35 *Q.* How was this controversy determined?

A. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question; *verse* 2.

Note, It is probable that at this time Paul told Peter, James and John, of the liberty of the gospel, or the freedom from all jewish ceremonies which he preached to the gentiles; *Gal.* ii. 1—9. and which he calls his gospel, being eminently the apostle of the gentiles; *Gal.* ii. 7—9. and 1 *Tim.* ii. 7.

36 *Q.* How did the apostles and elders decide it?

A. First, Peter declared that the gentiles had received the gospel from his mouth, as well as the Jews, and there was now no difference between them, since God had declared his acceptance of them, by giving them the Holy Spirit, and that without circumcision. Secondly, Barnabas and Paul rehearsed what wondrous success God had given to their ministry among the gentiles, and what miracles were wrought among them: Then James delivered his opinion, that since the gentiles had received the gospel, as it was foretold by the prophets, they should not be burdened with circumcision, and other jewish ceremonies; upon which, at last, the apostles and elders, and the whole church, sent a message to Antioch, and other countries, that the gentile converts were not bound by the jewish laws: Yet, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, they required them at that time to abstain from meats offered to idols, from eating blood, from things strangled, and from fornication; *verses* 6—30.

37 *Q.* Why were these few things so particularly forbid to the gentile converts?

A. Some suppose these were the things always forbidden to the jewish proselytes of the gate. See note on Question 26. And that it would have given too much offence to the Jews, as well as to these proselytes, if the apostles had not required the gentile converts to observe these rules, at least for the present season.

Note, Fornication was a thing always unlawful in itself, yet here other things are joined with it, which are not sinful in their own nature, because the eating of blood and things offered to idols were frequently attended with fornication and impurity among the gentiles at their idolatrous feasts, and therefore this sin of fornication is expressly forbidden here, to put the christians always in mind of the unlawfulness of it; and more particularly,

because some professed christians in that age pretended it to be lawful, such as the Gnostics, Nicolaitans, &c.

Abstinence from things offered to idols seems to be but a temporary command, for particular times and places, since it is permitted, in some cases, by the apostle, *viz.* where it gives no offence; 1 *Cor.* x. 19—31. And abstinence from blood being not in itself unlawful, seems to stand on the same foot; for it is plain, that the reason given against eating blood, is because it was devoted to God to make atonement for sin; *Lev.* xvii. 10—14. And the blood of beasts slain for food was to be poured out on the ground, because the life or most noble part of the creature was contained in it, and was devoted to God, as a sort of first-fruits, to sanctify the rest for the eater's use. But now the blood of Christ having made full atonement for sin, and all sorts of food, under the New Testament, being sanctified to the eater by the word and prayer, 1 *Tim.* iv. 3—5. blood has neither of these uses continued; and is therefore one of those meats which may be eaten with thanksgiving, though it was forbidden at first, for a season, together with meats offered to idols, lest the Jews and proselytes should take offence.

38 *Q.* What were the next travels of Paul and Barnabas?

A. They determined to visit their brethren in every city, where they had preached the gospel; but they could not agree about taking John Mark for their assistant, because he had left them before in the middle of their work; *verses* 36—38.

39 *Q.* How was this contention ended between Barnabas and Paul?

A. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; Paul chose Silas, who had been sent with them from Jerusalem to Antioch, and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches; *verses* 39—41.

40 *Q.* Were did Paul meet with Timothy?

A. He was a young disciple at Lystra, the son of a jewish woman, and Paul took him for their companion in the ministry; and they travelled through many parts of that country which is now called the Lesser Asia; *Acts* xvi. 1—8.

Note, Asia, is a large country, one quarter of the world. The Lesser Asia is the same with Natolia, a square country between the Euxine sea and the Mediterranean. But the Asia which the scripture so frequently speaks of in the Acts, seems to be but a small part of this Lesser Asia, including only Phrygia, Mysia, Caria and Lybia, which are washed on the west by the Ægean sea, and where the famous seven churches were; *Rev.* i. 11.

41 *Q.* Where was the next remarkable place of their ministry?

A. They were invited to Macedonia by a vision, and they went to Philippi, a chief city of that country, and preached there with some success; *verses* 9—15.

Note, Here it is probable that Luke, who wrote the Acts of the apostles, became a companion of Paul, because, from this time, he uses the word "we" in his history.

42 *Q.* What miracle was wrought there?

A. They cast a devil out of a certain young woman, who brought much gain to her masters, by foretelling things to come; *verses* 16—18.

43 *Q.* How did her masters bear it when they saw their gains were gone?

A. They brought Paul and Silas to the magistrates, and charged them with teaching strange customs; whereupon they were beaten and imprisoned, and their feet made fast in the stocks; *verses* 19—24.

44 *Q.* How were they released thence?

A. At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God; the prison was

shaken with an earthquake, the doors opened, their bands were loosed; upon which the jailor awaking, was going to kill himself, supposing the prisoners had been fled; *verses* 25—27.

45 *Q.* How was this self murder prevented?

A. Paul and Silas shewed themselves as his prisoners, preached the gospel to him, upon which he believed, and he and his house were baptized; *verses* 28—34.

46 *Q.* But did the magistrates then dismiss them?

A. Yes, they desired them to depart when they knew they were Romans, because they had beaten and imprisoned them uncondemned; *verses* 35—40.

47 *Q.* What trials did they meet with at Thessalonica?

A. Many Greeks and Jews were converted there; but the unbelieving Jews there rose up against them, and almost in every city where they came; and they went next to Berea; *Acts* xvii. 1—10.

48 *Q.* What was the wise and generous conduct of the Bereans?

A. They, that is, the Jews of Berea, searched the scriptures daily, to find whether Paul and Silas taught the truth: And by this practice many of them were led to believe in Christ; *verses* 10—13.

49 *Q.* In what manner did Paul preach when he came to Athens?

A. He disputed with the Jews in their synagogues, with the devout persons, and with the heathen philosophers in the market-place, and on Mars'-hill he took occasion to preach the true God to the people from an altar he found inscribed, "To the unknown God;" *verses* 16—30.

50 *Q.* But did he not also preach Jesus Christ and the gospel?

A. Yes, by preaching natural religion first, he led them by degrees to the doctrine of Christ, and assured them, that Jesus Christ was appointed to be the Judge of the world, and that God had raised him from the dead, as a sure token of it; *verses* 30, 31.

51 *Q.* What employment had Paul at Corinth?

A. He there met with Aquila, a believing Jew, with his wife Priscilla, and wrought with him at his trade, for they were both tent-makers; but he preached in the jewish synagogue every sabbath; *verses* 1—4.

52 *Q.* What effect had his preaching there?

A. He continued there by orders received from Christ in a vision a year and six months, and some Jews and many gentiles believed, and were baptized; *verses* 5—11.

53 *Q.* What persecution did he meet with there?

A. The Jews brought him before Gallio the deputy-governor, but he wisely refused to take cognizance of any of their controversies about religion, unless they could have charged him with some wickedness or injustice; *verses* 12—16.

Note, *First*, Though Paul found such great and remarkable success in his ministry among the Corinthians, yet by the means of some false brethren, and some ambitious pretenders to apostleship, there were such factions and contentions raised in this church, that cost him much sorrow of heart; and this was increased by the irregular lives and immoral practices of some of his converts there, which occasioned his writing two large and excellent epistles to them.

Secondly, It is thought most probable that Paul, who went from Corinth to Cenchrea and to Ephesus, left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, where they instructed Apollos, a fervent preacher, a disciple of John the Baptist, in the gospel of Christ; but that Paul

himself went to Jerusalem to the feast, and returned to Ephesus again before Aquila went thence, and before this great success at Ephesus began, which is related in the very next chapter, *viz.* the nineteenth.

54 *Q.* When Paul came to Ephesus, what remarkable occurrences did he meet with there?

A. He found some persons who were baptized only unto John's baptism, and he preached Jesus Christ to them, and they believed, and were baptized in the name of Christ; and when Paul laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues; *Acts* xix. 1—7.

55 *Q.* How did he perform the rest of his ministry there?

A. Three months he preached the gospel in the jewish synagogue, but when the Jews were hardened against him he taught the same gospel in the school of one Tyrannus for near two years, and healed many diseases, and cast out evil spirits; *verses* 8—12.

56 *Q.* Was he not persecuted by the heathens in this place?

A. When Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines for the goddess Diana, whose famous temple stood at Ephesus, found that the worship of the goddess declined through Paul's preaching, he stirred up the men of his trade, and by them a multitude of people were raised against Paul, so that he was in danger of his life; *verses* 24—29.

57 *Q.* How did he escape here?

A. The town-clerk finding such a rude tumult, with soft words composed and quieted them, and bid Demetrius go fairly to law, if any man had injured him; *verses* 29—41. The uproar being thus composed, Paul took his leave of the disciples, and after several short journeys and labours in the gospel, in those parts, he came to Troas; *Acts* xx. 1—6.

58 *Q.* Was there any thing of importance fell out in the seven days while Paul tarried at Troas?

A. Paul preached, and broke bread on the first day of the week, and continuing his speech till midnight, a young man named Eutychus slept and fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead; *Acts* xx. 6—9.

59 *Q.* How was the young man recovered?

A. Paul fell on him, and embraced him and brought him alive before them; *verses* 10—12.

60 *Q.* What exhortation did Paul give at Miletus?

A. He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church, made a most affectionate discourse to them; bid them, "Take heed to themselves and to the church of God which he had purchased with his own blood;" warned them of grievous wolves that should enter into the flock, encouraged them to persevere in faith and holiness, and recommended them to God and the word of his grace; *verses* 17—35.

61 *Q.* Whither did Paul travel next?

A. He hastened to Jerusalem by many journeys and voyages, travelling through several cities, though he was dissuaded from it by many disciples, and was particularly told by Agabus, a christian prophet, that he should be bound at Jerusalem, and delivered into the hands of the gentiles; *Acts* xx. 16. and xxi. 1—15.

62 *Q.* In what manner did Agabus deliver this prophecy?

A. He bound his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle, and said, "Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle; *verse* 11.

63 *Q.* What was the noble speech and resolution of Paul on this occasion?

A. When the brethren wept at the thoughts of his sufferings, he answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus;" *Acts* xxi. 12, 13.

64 *Q.* What was the first thing he did when he came to Jerusalem?

A. He went to James the apostle, and to the elders, and declared what God had wrought by his ministry among the gentiles; *Acts* xxi. 17—20.

Note, Here he now published freely to the whole church his success among idolaters, which he had communicated only before privately, and to a few; *Gal.* ii. 2.

65 *Q.* What advice did the elders at Jerusalem give him?

A. They advised him to shave and purify himself by an offering after the manner of the Jews who had the vow of the nazarite upon them; *Numb.* vi. 2—12. that he might not be suspected of disobeying the jewish law, either by the believing or unbelieving Jews, who were all zealous for it; *verses* 20—25.

Note, This compliance of St. Paul being recommended to him by one apostle, *viz* James, and by the elders at Jerusalem; *Acts* xxi. 18, 20—26. and being put in practice by himself, who was, perhaps, the chief of the apostles, we cannot reasonably suppose it sinful or blameworthy, especially since the scripture passes no censure on it; and yet must we not say the religious ceremonies of the Jews, and particularly all the sin-offerings such as this was, *Numb.* vi. 14. were abolished by the great sacrifice of Christ, and the introduction of christianity by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost?

In order therefore to vindicate this practice of St. Paul, we may consider the jewish ceremonies under a twofold aspect.

1. As they were part of their national laws, under God as their king; and,

2. As part of their religious worship paid to him as their God. Now the jewish state being not yet destroyed, may we not suppose that St. Paul might comply with these practices as a part of the national jewish laws, rather than as religious worship, for he every where declared the gentiles to be free from them?

Or, if we consider these ceremonies only in their religious design, may we not suppose, that from the death of Christ, which was the substantial sacrifice, these shadows so far vanished, that they ceased to be necessary, but were left, for a season, as indifferent things to the Jews, which, as the apostle expresses, *Heb.* viii. 13. were decaying and waxing old, and ready to vanish away? May we not suppose the divine indulgence of them for a season, because of the weakness of mankind, who cannot easily bear a universal change of their ancient customs all at once? and for this reason, lest the Jews should take too great offence, St. Paul took Timothy and circumcised him, in order to make him a preacher, since his mother was a Jewess; *Acts* xvi. 1, 3. this being a lawful thing to him, though not necessary. At the same time he would not have Titus circumcised because he was a gentile, and had nothing to do with the jewish law; *Gal.* ii. 3. And the same apostle being a Jew, for the same reason might comply with the jewish rites of shaving his head, and sacrificing, as things left indifferent to the Jews for a season, by the will of God, in compliance with the weakness of man.

66 *Q.* Did this piece of compliance secure Paul from the persecution of the Jews?

A. The unbelieving Jews had such a rooted hatred against him, for his zeal and success in preaching up christianity, that they seized him under pretence of his having brought Greeks into the temple, though it was not true; and they were ready to tear him

to pieces till the chief captain rescued him, and gave him leave to give an account of himself to the multitude; *verses* 27—40.

67 *Q.* What defence did Paul then make?

A. He gave them the history of his being a Jew by birth, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, of his former zeal against Christ, his being struck down to the ground on the road, and called to from heaven by Jesus Christ, and also of his vision of Christ in the temple, sending him to preach the gospel to the gentiles; *Acts* xxii. 1—21.

68 *Q.* How did the Jews bear this speech?

A. When he spake of being sent to the gentiles, they lifted up their voices, and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit he should live;" *verse* 22.

69 *Q.* How was he secured from their rage?

A. The chief captain again seized him, and brought him into the castle, and the next day he ordered the chief priests and the council to appear, that Paul might give an account of himself to them; *verses* 24—30.

70 *Q.* How did Paul plead his own cause here before the council?

A. He found one part was Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, and the other part Pharisees who believed it; and therefore he artfully, and yet truly declared, "It is for the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question:" For indeed the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and our resurrection by him, were some of the greatest articles of the christian faith, and that which Paul preached; *Acts* xxiii. 6, 7.

71 *Q.* What effect had this upon the council?

A. They fell into contention among themselves, and the Pharisees said, "they found no evil in him:" And again the chief captain secured him in the castle; *verses* 9, 10.

72 *Q.* What particular encouragement had Paul from heaven under these sufferings?

A. It was this night that the Lord Jesus appeared to him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome;" *Acts* xxiii. 11.

73 *Q.* What was the next danger he was exposed to?

A. More than forty Jews had bound themselves under a great curse, not to eat till they had killed Paul, and therefore they persuaded the chief priests and elders, to desire that he might once again be brought before them; *verses* 12—15.

74 *Q.* By what means did the providence of God secure Paul from this conspiracy?

A. Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, having private notice of this conspiracy from Paul's nephew, sent him to Cesarea to Felix the governor of Judea, by night, with a guard of almost five hundred men; *verses* 16—35.

75 *Q.* What was the next step taken by the high-priests and elders to condemn Paul, and how did Paul defend himself?

A. They went down to Cesarea and laid their accusation before Felix: But Paul defended himself by declaring, "he believed the law and the prophets," nor was he guilty of profaning the temple, or raising a tumult, nor of any thing of which they accused him; *Acts* xxiv. 1—21.

76 *Q.* What did Felix determine concerning him?

A. Felix only kept him as a prisoner; for he saw no reason to condemn him, and often discoursed with him, hoping that Paul, or his friends, would give him a good bribe for a release; *verses* 22—28.

77 *Q.* Had Paul's discourses any good effect upon Felix?

A. Once as he spoke concerning faith in Christ, and reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and bid Paul retire, till he had a more convenient season to hear him further; *verses* 24, 25. but he kept him prisoner still to please the Jews; *verse* 27.

78 *Q.* Did the high-priests and elders entirely drop their accusations against Paul?

A. Two years after this, Festus was made governor in the room of Felix, and the Jews went to Cesarea and laid in grievous complaints against him; *Acts* xxiv. 27. and xxv. 2.

79 *Q.* How did Paul come off here before Festus?

A. He utterly denied the charge of the Jews, and when Festus would have had him go up to Jerusalem to be judged of these matters, as the Jews desired, in hopes to kill him by the way, Paul told Festus that he knew very well he had done the Jews no wrong, that no man ought to deliver him up to the hands of the Jews, and therefore he appealed to Cæsar; *Acts* xxv. 9—12.

80 *Q.* What occasion had Paul then to plead his cause again before Agrippa, who was the king of Galilee?

A. Agrippa, with his sister Bernice, came to make a visit to Festus; upon which Festus, among other conversation, informed him that he was going to send Paul the prisoner to Cæsar, upon his appeal, and he would fain send to Cæsar a more particular account of the case; upon which Agrippa desired to hear Paul himself; *verses* 13—27.

81 *Q.* What was the substance of Paul's speech to Agrippa?

A. Paul knew that Agrippa was acquainted with the laws and customs of the Jews, and therefore he related before him in brief, the history of his younger life as a Pharisee, his hatred of the christians, his being called by Jesus Christ from heaven, when he was on the road to Damascus, and his preaching the resurrection of Christ and his gospel ever since; which he maintained to be all agreeable to Moses and the prophets; *Acts* xxvi. 1—23.

82 *Q.* What influence had this speech upon Agrippa?

A. Paul addressed king Agrippa in so agreeable a manner, that Agrippa declared, that he was almost persuaded to be a christian; and that Paul had done nothing worthy of death, or of bonds; and that he might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Cæsar; *verses* 26—32.

83 *Q.* How was Paul sent to Cæsar at Rome?

A. He was sent thither by sea, with several other prisoners, and soldiers to guard them: They had a voyage of the utmost danger, through storms and dark weather, which Paul foresaw, and warned the sailors of it. They were at last shipwrecked, but all escaped safe to land, as Paul had assured them by a vision of an angel. The name of the island was called Melita, now, Malta; *Acts* xxvii.

84 *Q.* Was there any remarkable occurrence fell out there?

A. The rain and the cold made them kindle a fire, and there came a viper from among the sticks, and fastened on Paul's hand; but he shook it off and felt no harm; *Acts* xxviii. 1—5.

85 *Q.* What did the barbarous people of the island think of this when they saw it?

A. They thought at first this man was a murderer, and vengeance pursued him at land, though he had escaped the sea: But when they saw him shake off the viper, and no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god; *verses* 4—6.

86 *Q.* What entertainment did they meet with upon the island?

A. Publius, the chief man there, lodged them three days: Paul prayed, and healed his father of a bloody flux, by laying on his hands; upon which many other diseased persons came, and were healed; *verses* 7—9.

87 *Q.* How long did they tarry there?

A. They tarried three months, because it was winter; and then sailed again, and landed in Italy, and travelled towards Rome; *verses* 11—13.

88 *Q.* How was Paul disposed of when he came into the city?

A. He was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him; *verse* 16.

89 *Q.* What was Paul's first work when he came to Rome?

A. In three days time, he sent for the chief of the Jews that were in the city, and excused himself to them, that he was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; and afterwards, on a day appointed, he preached the gospel of Christ to them out of the law of Moses and the prophets; *verses* 17—23.

90 *Q.* What effect had this sermon of Paul on the Jews at Rome?

A. They were much divided; some believed the gospel, and others opposed it: Upon which Paul answered, that the salvation of God is sent to the gentiles, and they will hear it; *verses* 24, 28.

91 *Q.* How long did Paul continue there?

A. He dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and preached the things concerning Christ to all that would come to hear him; *verses* 29—31.

Note, Here ends the history of the book of scripture, called the Acts of the Apostles. What remains is collected from the epistles of Paul.

92 *Q.* Since several of the epistles of Paul are said to be written from Rome, which are those which he is supposed to write at this time?

A. Those to the Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and to Philemon; and he tells them he shall soon come to them: And about this time his bonds were manifest in all the place, having continued there so long; *Phil.* i. 13, 26. *Eph.* vi. 32. *Col.* iv. 18. *Philemon* 9, 22.

93 *Q.* When he was released from prison at Rome, whither did he go?

A. Into several countries both of Europe and Asia, preaching the gospel, and confirming the christian converts.

94 *Q.* Who attended and assisted him in his ministry and his travels?

A. Sometimes Tychicus, or Timothy; sometimes Titus, Demas, or Luke, Silas, or Trophimus, whom he left sick at Miletum, when he went again to Rome. See 2 *Tim.* iv. 10—12.

95 *Q.* What became of him when he came the second time to Rome?

A. He was cast into close prison, and when he made his first defence, all men forsook him; and Alexander, the coppersmith, did him much hurt; 2 *Tim.* iv. 14—16.

96 *Q.* Did he finish his life and labours here?

A. He now tells Timothy, that the time of his departure is at hand, and he was just ready to be offered up when he wrote the second epistle to him from Rome; 2 *Tim.* iv. 6. And when he had both laboured and suffered more than any of the apostles, as he himself had told us; 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. 2 *Cor.* xi. 23, &c. he was beheaded, as a martyr for Christ, under the reign of Nero, emperor of Rome, as the ancient historians inform us.

Note, My design in writing this summary of Scripture History, by way of question and answer, was chiefly for the easier instruction of the younger part of mankind, and

not so much for the improvement of the learned; for which reason I have not been solicitous to trace out, with a critical and chronological accuracy, every step of the travels of Paul; nor relate how often he went to Jerusalem and to other cities, in repeated voyages and journeys; but only to point out his most remarkable travels, labours, and sufferings. A more exact account is drawn up, with great labour and skill, by a learned writer in his book entiled, "Miscellanea Sacra," Vol. I. to which I would refer those who desire a fuller information of this matter.

The principal thing I had in view from the beginning to the end of this work, was to set down some of the most necessary, and the most important matters of fact recorded in scripture; amongst which I have chosen out those, which would be most entertaining to younger minds, and would make the deepest and most lasting impressions upon them, and such as would lead them into a survey of the various and wonderful transactions of the providence and grace of God among men, the successive and gradual discoveries of the will of God to men, the different forms of religion in different ages of mankind, the rules of duty toward God and toward one another; together with an account of their obedience or disobedience to him, with their blessings and their punishments, their afflictions, trials, and deliverances, and that from the beginning of the world to the promulgation of the gospel, by the apostles, in the first age of the christian church: And this is as far as the history of the scripture reaches.

ADVERTISEMENT

RELATING TO

THE FIGURES.

THE history of persons and nations, the description of places and things, the customs of particular countries and ages, together with the rites and ceremonies of worship, may be represented to the reader with much greater exactness and perspicuity, by assistance borrowed from maps and figures, which set them plainly before the eye. But there were two things which hindered me from making so great use of these assistances, as I could have desired.

The first is this: It would have increased the expence, and rendered the book perhaps too chargeable to common private families, and their children, whose instruction in the knowledge of things relating to the church of God in all ages, I have chiefly designed.

The other thing that discouraged me, was the great difficulty to adjust the exact form of several places and things mentioned in this book; particularly that of the city Jerusalem, and the various remarkable parts of it; and the temple built by Solomon, and rebuilt, first by Zerubbabel, and afterward by Herod; together with the several courts and edifices that belonged to it. There is so very wide a difference among the several opinions of learned men, who have laboured in describing the temple, such as Villalpandus, Arias Montanus, Witsius, Lightfoot, Father L'Amy, &c. that it is hard to determine with any certainty which was the true form, and I was not willing to lead my readers into a mistake.

However, that this book might not be utterly destitute of some of these advantages, I have endeavoured to represent the tabernacle raised by Moses in the wilderness, in the midst of the camp of Israel, together with the altars and vessels that relate to it, the several coverings of it, the court round about it, and the garments of the high-priest, that my readers might obtain some clearer ideas of these things; because some of these things are so often mentioned in the Old Testament, and to these the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, has so frequent reference while he explains the gospel of Christ: And I hope these will in some measure attain the end which I proposed to myself.

Plate I.

The Tabernacle with the Court and Camp

A. The Tabernacle. B. The Laver. C. The Altar of burnt offering
D. The Court. E. The Cloud of Glory.

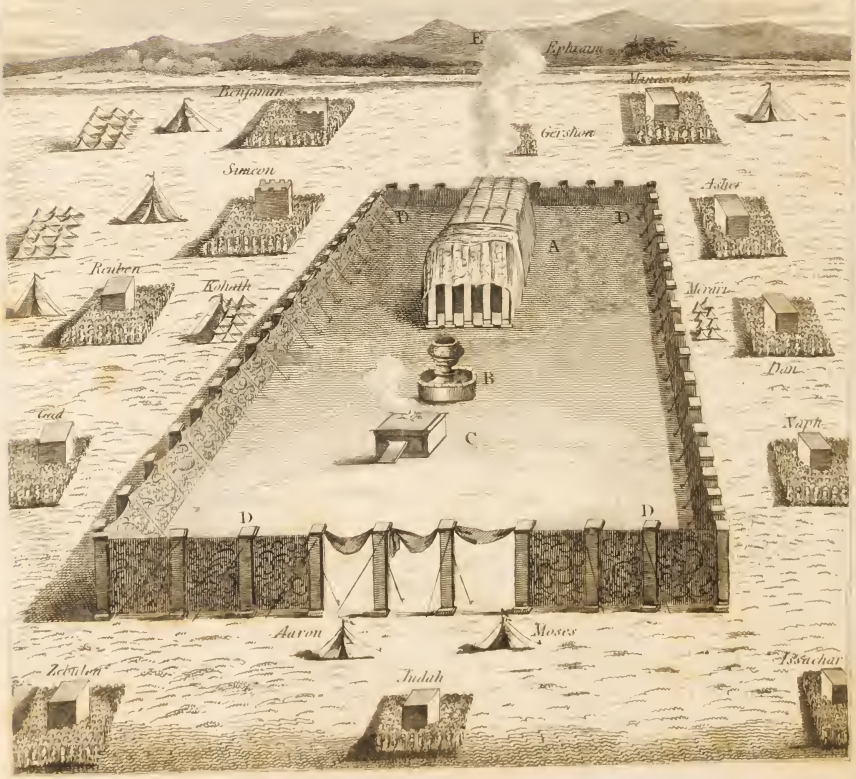


PLATE I.

In the court of the tabernacle, the reader may observe the pillars of wood standing on sockets of brass, with the hangings of fine linen five cubits deep, which is supposed to be gauze or net work, that the whole nation might see what was done there: These hangings went all round, and inclosed the court, which was a long square, a hundred cubits in length from east to west, and fifty cubits in breadth from north to south. *Exod.* xxxviii. 9. and xxvii. 18.

He may observe also the pins of brass fixed in the ground, to which the top of every pillar was fastened by a cord, to keep the pillars firm and steady against the wind. *Num.* iii. 37. and iv. 32.

The upper part of the laver is supposed to have several pipes or holes for letting water out in a small stream into the large hollow bottom or foot of it, whereby the priests might wash themselves with great conveniency.

The altar of burnt-offering hath its ascent made sloping, and not with steps, which were forbidden. *Exod.* xx. 26.

The several tribes, which form the camp of Israel, are pitched round about the court of the tabernacle, according to the best account of learned men, which they derive from *Num.* i. 52, 53. and *Num.* ii. Gershom, Kohath, and Merari, which are the three families of the tribe of Levi, are nearest the court: Moses and Aaron just before the gate of the court.

Note, In each of the tribes you see their army first, the general's tent or pavilion in the midst, and the tents of the tribe behind.

PLATE II.

The two undermost coverings, *viz.* that of goats hair, and that of fine linen, were divided into several curtains; but the two uppermost were not. The covering of fine linen was ten curtains; the covering of goats hair was eleven curtains, that one curtain might hang down, on the five pillars, before the entrance of the tabernacle, or be doubled backward upon it. *Exod.* xxvi. 1, &c. And yet, besides this, there was a hanging or vail of fine linen for the door of the tabernacle, of blue, purple, and scarlet, wrought with needle-work, like the vail that hung at the entrance of the holy of holies: And therefore St. Paul calls that the second vail, *Heb.* ix. 3. in reference to this hanging at the door of the tabernrcle, or holy place, which was the first.

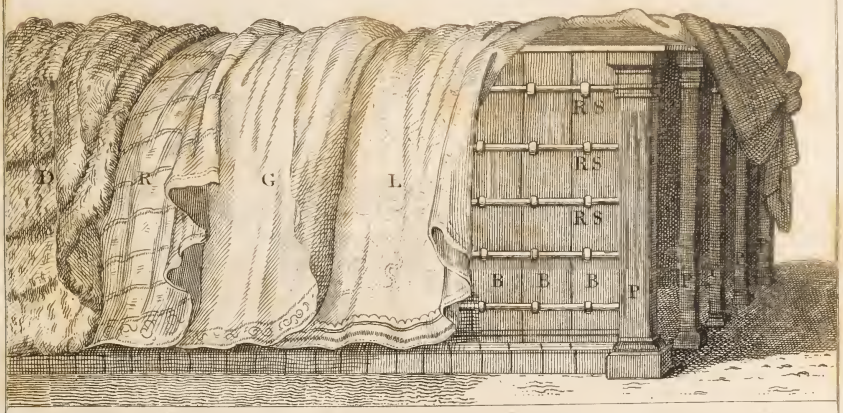
The five staves or bars thrust through all the rings on the boards of the tabernacle, held the tabernacle together.

THE PRIESTS GARMENTS.

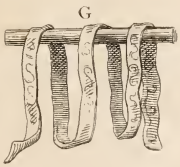
Several of these vestments, even all in the upper rank, belonged to the common priests, as well as to the high-priests; *viz.* B the linen breeches, and C the coat, G the girdle, and M the mitre: Yet these vestments of the common priests are not supposed to be embroidered, but all white. We read also of Samuel, when a child, wearing a linen ephod, 1 *Sam.* ii. 18. and of the common priests having a sort of ephod, 1 *Sam.* xxii. 18. but what that was, is not so easy to determine; probably it was like the high-priest's, but plain and not embroidered.

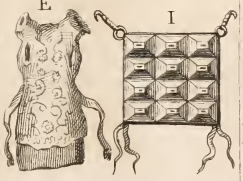
Learned men have generally supposed the curious girdle of the ephod, to be always fastened on to the ephod, because it is said, *Exod.* xxviii. 8. "the girdle which is upon it;" and that it hung out on each side, like two ends of a girdle, to bind it round the body; which therefore I have described in the same manner, in conformity to custom, though I think scripture doth not certainly determine it: And on this account, I call the other girdle G, the girdle of the coat, which was common to other priests as well as the high-priest.

The Outside of the Tabernacle with its Coverings.



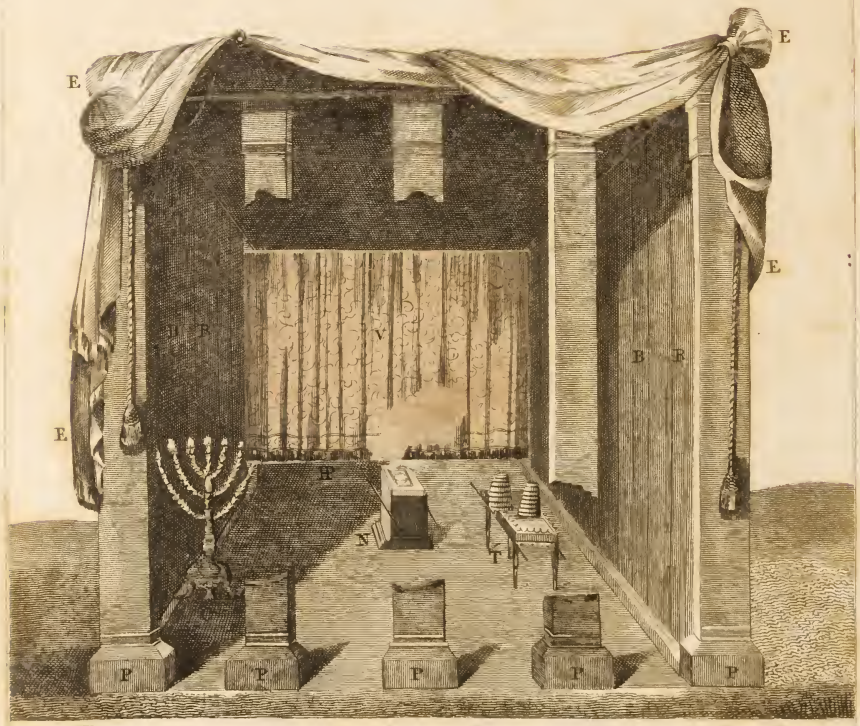
P. The Five Pillars at the entrance. B. The Boards. S. The Silver Sockets.
R.S. Rings and Staves or Bars. L. The under Covering of fine Linen Curtains.
G. Curtains of Goats hair. R. Covering of Rams Skins. D. of Badgers Skins.





B. Linen Breeches for the Priests. C. Embroiderd Linen Coat. R. Robe of the Ephod all blue. G. Girdle of the Coat. E. Ephod and Girdle. I. Breast Plate & Jewels.
M. Linen Mitre. P. Golden plate on the Mitre. HP. High Priest full dress.

The Inside of the Tabernacle with its Holy Vessels.



H. The most holy place. A. The Ark. G. The cloud of Glory. I. &c. Four Pillars to hang the vail on. V. The vail dividing the Holy place from the most Holy. HP. The Holy place. N. Altar of Incense. C. Candlestick. T. Table of Shew-Bread. BB. &c. Boards of the Tabernacle. P. &c. five Pillars on which the Curtain hung at the entrance of the Tabernacle. N.B. Note the three middle pillars are cut off that the Vessels behind may appear. E. The curtain at the entrance of the Tabernacle.

PLATE III.

Of the five pillars of the front of the tabernacle, three are cut off both above and below, to let the vessels behind appear.

On the six loaves of shew-bread, which stood at each end of the golden table, painters and learned men generally place two plates or dishes of incense, as a covering to the loaves; but the scripture does not give order for it.

The vail V, which is hung on four pillars, is to be lifted up to shew the holy of holies behind it, where the ark of the covenant stands.

On the side of the ark, and of the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread, are staves thrust through rings, which were made to carry those vessels on the shoulders of the priests. *Exod.* xxv.

The reader, perhaps, may complain that he finds no cherub upon the little figure of the ark in the most holy place. The reason of it is the same which I gave for not describing Solomon's temple, *viz.* because learned men are so greatly divided in their opinions about the shape or form of a cherub: And though I have taken no small pains to enquire into this matter, both by the comparison of all the texts in the Bible where it is mentioned, and by consulting many learned writers, yet I cannot arrive at any satisfaction or certainty what was the true figure of those cherubs which were placed on the ark: And I question whether, among the numerous forms in which learned men and painters have described them, there is any one which has hit exactly on the truth. To me it appears very probable, that if they had any feet visible, they were cloven like the feet of an ox or calf, and perhaps they might have the face of an ox also. But a particular dissertation on this subject, as the fruit of my inquiries, could not be so proper for this place.

PRAYERS

COMPOSED FOR THE USE AND IMITATION OF

CHILDREN,

SUITED TO THEIR DIFFERENT AGES AND THEIR VARIOUS OCCASIONS:

TOGETHER WITH

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUTH

IN THE DUTY OF PRAYER,

DRAWN UP BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

AND

A SERIOUS ADDRESS TO THEM ON THAT SUBJECT.

THE PREFACE.

I HOPE there is no need to make an apology for composing little prayers, in order to teach children this first and necessary part of practical religion.

As soon as they are capable of learning any thing concerning that great and glorious God, who created them, they are capable of being taught to address him in a way of prayer, for the good things they want, and to make their acknowledgments to him in a way of praise, for the daily blessings they receive. Yet our own experience teaches us, that in the younger years of life we are incapable of framing our own addresses to God, so as to honour him according to his perfections. We are not only unacquainted with our own various wants, but we are unable to express ourselves in any of the parts of prayer in a proper manner. Therefore such assistances as may be derived from forms and patterns of devotion, are necessary to lead children into the most early and easy practice of their duty. Our blessed Lord himself gave his disciples a form of prayer,* when, in the younger years of their christianity, they desired him to teach them to pray; Luke xi. 2, 3. *When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.*

I could never approve of confining persons, and binding them down to a constant set form of prescribed words, especially when they are capable of adding, leaving out, and altering a prayer with judgment and discretion, because the temper of our spirits, the occurrences of life, and our occasions of converse with God, are infinitely various: And it may be easily proved, that our Saviour never intended so to confine his disciples; yet I am persuaded there may have been a superstitious abhorrence of all forms of prayer, as though they were sinful on the one hand, as well as a superstitious fondness for them, and imposition of them, as though they were necessary on the other: For superstition consists in making that a sin, which God has not made so, as well as in making that necessary, which God has not appointed.

I verily believe that many persons, grown up to mature years, through an unreasonable prejudice and aversion to all forms of prayer from their childhood, have suffered some disadvantage in their private devotions; their spirits have been early contracted and

* Here it may be observed, that not only by the writers of the church of England, but by the protestant dissenters also, this is expressly called, "The Form of Prayer which Christ taught his Disciples." See "The Assembly's Lesser Catechism," answer ninety-ninth.

bound up within too narrow a circle of pious thoughts, for want of those greater enlargements, which might have been attained by a prudent and pious use of books of devotion. There is an excellent improvement to be made of such religious composures, without confining ourselves to the whole matter, form and order, to all the words and syllables of those devotional writings. Many sentences may be changed, put in, or left out, according to various cases that occur in daily life; and patterns of prayer may be of considerable service, where they are not expressly used as forms of worship.

Among the most zealous writers against the imposition of liturgies and forms of prayer, I know not any one who has declared all forms to be unlawful. The reverend and learned Dr. Owen himself, who, perhaps, was as zealous as any man in this matter, has freely expressed himself in these words, viz. *To compose and write forms of prayer, to be directive and doctrinal helps unto others as to the matter and method to be used in the right discharge of this duty, is lawful, and may in some cases be useful:* And that, *To read, consider, and meditate upon such written prayers, or to make use of expressions set down in them, where the hearts of those that read them are really affected, because they find their state and condition, their wants and desires declared in them, is not unlawful, but may be of good use unto some.*

And as the private religion of some persons has suffered for want of such assistance, so I am well assured, that one reason why there are so many prayerless families in the nation, even where the governors of those families are truly religious, is because they find they are not capable, or have not courage to express themselves in morning and evening prayer, in the midst of their families, in a proper and edifying manner; and yet, through some mistaken principles in their education, they have been taught to abandon all the assistances they might derive from such religious composures. I would not willingly believe that any wise and pious person would abhor and censure all manner of forms of prayer when used in a pious and prudent way. What if the master of a family took some well-written prayers, as *directive in the matter and method for the right discharge of this duty* (as Dr. Owen expresses it), *and made use of the expressions set down in them, where the state and condition, wants and desires, of his family were declared,* and then added and altered, or omitted or enlarged, according to present occasions? I am sure this practice would be far better than to let families go on from year to year, without any prayer in them at all. I wish all serious minds would take this matter into further consideration.

But to pass this by at present: Let the case stand as it will with regard to grown persons, yet it is certain that most of the children, who have never been taught any little prayers in their younger years, grow up too far in life void of practical religion, and without a serious and particular acknowledgment of God, our Creator and our Saviour. It has been certainly the case of some children, and perhaps of multitudes, that they would fain have begun more early to address the great God in prayer, if they had known what to say. Whereas those who have been trained up in the use of

such helps as these, have learned betimes the language of prayer; and this would be much more happily effected, if they were not confined to one set form, but were furnished with a variety of assistances, and if they were taught to use that variety in a proper manner, for the exercise of their own thoughts in devotion, and for their acquiring a readiness to express the pious working of their own hearts thereby.

I grant there may have been such times and seasons, wherein the Spirit of God has been poured out so plentifully as a spirit of supplication, and that on children, as well as persons of riper years, as would render such helps as these unnecessary: And would to God that such a season would return again, that our ears might hear these pleasing wonders, and our hearts feel the overflowing delight of such heavenly devotions! But in such a degenerate age as this, wherein the blessed Spirit is greatly withdrawn from the church of God, all the assistances we can obtain, are little enough to uphold and promote serious religion: And if any persons have ever any need of such aids as these, the children and youth of this generation have the most need of them; and I am sure, I am not alone in this opinion. It is in this view of things, that I have complied with the repeated importunities of some of my friends, and sent these little composures into the world. The methods and rules which I have laid down to myself, and according to which I have framed them, were these:

I. I thought it proper to compose distinct prayers for children, according to their different successive ages: This made it necessary for me to distinguish them by different titles, viz. *The Infant's Prayer* at three or four years old; and from thence to seven or eight, *the Young Child's Prayer:* From eight years old to ten or twelve, *the Child's Prayer:* From thence to fourteen or fifteen, *the Youth's Prayer* may be used: And from fifteen they may make some use of *the Young Person's Prayer*, till by holy diligence, and the assistance of divine grace, they may be enabled to pray without the necessity of such helps as these. Every careful reader will observe, how much I have endeavoured to suit these prayers to the understanding and to the memory of children, in their younger years of life, and that both in the sense and language of the composures, as well as in the length of them. According as children improve, more or less, in their understanding and capacity, so they may, sooner or later, proceed to the more advanced forms.

II. I was willing to put into most of these prayers, as far as possible, the most common and general, the most easy, necessary, and practical notions that relate to religion, or the most important principles of doctrine and duty both toward God and toward man, that children, according to their different capacities and years, might be put in mind of them, whensoever they pray: And where some of these are omitted in the morning prayer, they are generally inserted in the evening, especially in the longer prayers, as the growing age and capacity of children permitted me to enlarge. Among these common and important principles, I esteem such attributes of God, as his perfect knowledge or wisdom, his almighty power, his hatred of sin, his general goodness, and his mercy to repenting sinners. I add also, such characters of God as our Creator,

our Preserver, our Father, the Author of all our blessings, our righteous Governor, and our final Judge and Rewarder. These ideas of God are within the reach and capacity of children.

In this rank, I place a sense of our duties to God, *viz*, fear, love, faith, hope, obedience, &c. and duties to man, *viz*. honour of superiors, truth, love, &c. a sense of sin, and the punishment due to it, the distinction between soul and body, the soul's survival of the body, and a state of happiness or misery hereafter, according to our behaviour here, the wrath of God in hell, which is threatened to impenitent sinners, and the promises of dwelling with God in heaven, to those who have fulfilled the various duties of religion and holiness here on earth. I add petitions for pardon of sin, for the knowledge of duty, and ability to perform it, whether it be duty to God or man, to parents, rulers, friends, &c. Petitions for all needful comforts of life, and preservation from all the follies and iniquities, the dangers and evils, of every kind, to which children are exposed, together with thanksgivings for mercies, which they have already received.

Among these necessary things, also, I esteem not only the doctrine of the guilt of sin, but also the want of a mediator to reconcile us to God, the doctrine of Christ, as the Son of God coming down to earth, dying to make atonement for our sins, rising again, ascending to heaven, and interceding for us there, and for whose sake mercies here on earth are bestowed upon us. It is necessary also to consider him as the Lord of all, who shall come at last to judge the world, and to whom our obedience and worship are due, as well as to God the Father. To these I may add the doctrine of our own ignorance and our weakness to learn and practise religion, by the power of our own spirits, and the need that we have of the inward teaching and assistance of the Spirit of God, whose influence we should teach children to seek early. Such subjects and notions as these I kept generally in my view, and endeavoured to work them at least into the longer composures, and to give some hints of them in the shorter.

III. Yet I must confess, I have been cautious of mingling such sublime notions in divinity, as are utterly too hard for children to understand: And for this reason, in the prayers for infants and young children, &c. I have omitted some of these things which are mentioned in the other following composures; for I am well satisfied, that the best way of teaching children, both in matters divine and human, is to lead them into some tolerable idea and conception of all the things signified by the words they are taught to use, as soon as those words are taught them; that they may not be accustomed, even in their younger days, to deal in mere sounds, to talk without ideas, and to speak words and syllables without a meaning. I hope no reader will be so unjust, as to suppose I would require in children a very distinct knowledge, and much less a perfect or comprehensive notion, of all those things of religion which go to compose a prayer: This is not attained by men, or indeed attainable. All that I aim at, is to have children taught to frame some tolerable conception of what is meant by the words they pronounce, that they may not say any part of their prayers like young parrots, without any meaning at all, or as the

Pater-nosters and *Ave-marys* are used in the church of Rome, where they say their prayers in an unknown tongue. Perhaps some may think I have transgressed this rule, in mentioning the mediation of Christ, in the prayers for infants, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in those which are composed for young children. But I was not willing to let children pass several years of life, without some hints of those two most peculiar glories of our religion: And for this reason, I desire parents and teachers to acquaint children early, with the most easy and general notion of these things, that they may not use these words merely by rote.

IV. I was desirous to frame all the expressions in so general a manner, as might not offend the spirits of good christians of different opinions, nor savour of a narrow party spirit, and betray children into a party zeal in their early years. It is this lays the foundation of long uncharitableness, and sullies the beauty of the gospel, which is a law of love. When the unnecessary phrases of the several sects of christians are mingled and made up with the prayers of children, they receive an early and lasting prejudice, that there is something very sacred and divine in all the words they are taught to use: The little creatures are hereby listed into a party from their infancy, and grow up to contend with fury in their maturer age, for that which they prayed for almost as soon as they could speak. I have endeavoured therefore to avoid those expressions, which would be offensive to pious minds on this account.

By observing this caution also, I have reason to hope that these composures may be made more extensively useful, because they are less offensive, to the various denominations of christians. As for those persons, who will cavil at every sentence that expresses the sacred doctrine of the Trinity, the corruption of our nature, the operations of God's Holy Spirit, the atonement of Christ for sin, or the necessity of divine grace, I am not solicitous to comport with their schemes, nor confine myself to such models as would exclude the peculiar revelations, or the chief blessings of christianity out of christian devotions.

V. I have taken care to use various forms of doxology, according to the examples of scripture: Not that I think a doxology is necessary in itself at the end of every prayer, for there are many more scriptural prayers without it than with it: But herein I have complied with present practice, in which it is generally used, and especially, since it closes the prayer which our Lord taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. When I use any of the doxologies of scripture in the prayers for children, which are not quite so easy to be understood by them, I have paraphrased or explained some of the words. This leads me to the next particular:

VI. It cost me much labour to express all the sacred sentiments of religion in the most plain, familiar, and easy language: And I hope the plainness of the style will not be an offence, since it is the only way to bring these things within the reach and capacity of young children; and this I have scarce ever yet seen done with sufficient care in any forms, though they were made on purpose for children. For this reason, I have not only avoided, in the prayers for children in their younger years, all long hard words

that have been introduced into divinity by the inventions of men, but even many of those more difficult words which the scripture itself uses, such as redemption, communion, sanctification, mortification, propitiation, regeneration, &c. as supposing children to have but very confused or mistaken ideas under them. Nor was I willing to use metaphorical expressions, such as the Lamb of God, or washing away our sins in his own blood, or sitting at the right hand of God, &c. without some little explication of them. I have therefore generally used literal expressions, to signify the religious sentiments which I introduce into these composures; unless it be where those literal expressions would be more difficult to be understood, and where the metaphors being very common, would more easily convey sufficient ideas into the minds of children. And it is for this reason, that where mention is made of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and of their offices in our salvation, I have seldom thought it sufficient to express these things in the brief, usual forms, *viz.* through our Lord Jesus Christ, or by the Holy Spirit, but have enlarged the manner of speech, to make the true ideas of those great doctrines appear plainer.

VII. I was solicitous to frame the first sentence of every prayer in a way suited to the time or occasion, whether of morning or evening worship, or on the Lord's Day; that so children, by having the first paragraph in memory, might be always directed when to use them properly, and not mistake the proper times and seasons for each of them, when their book was not at hand.

VIII. I always endeavoured to vary the expressions in every prayer, where the same sentiments are repeated; and especially to begin every sentence, as far as possible, with a different word, or in a different manner, and not to use any remarkable word twice in the same prayer, where I could avoid it. I must confess, that by reason of the great scarcity of such plain and familiar words as are understood by children, I found this part of my work exceeding difficult: And yet I have set a further guard upon myself still, so that I have scarce ever used the same three or four words together in any two of all these prayers, but endeavoured to vary the phrase perpetually; because, if the same words were repeated, children would be too ready to run out of one prayer into the other, when they repeat them by heart, and they would thereby join two disagreeing parts together, being led by the track and sound of the same words again occurring to them. Besides also, this variety of expression being treasured up in the memory, will tend to furnish and prepare them in their advancing years to pray without a form, which design I have always kept in view.

IX. I thought it proper, also, to cast some of these composures into a method, according to the several parts of prayer, *viz.* adoration, confession, petition, &c. which are explained more at large in my book, called "A Guide to Prayer:" Hereby two ends will be attained: First, Children will more easily learn by heart what is distinguished into divers paragraphs: And in the next place, they may learn the nature and parts of prayer by the use of these very forms: And they will hereby easily know when and where to add, or alter any expression, as they grow up to greater understanding.

By this means they may be instructed how to frame prayers for themselves, and by the blessing of God on these assistances, they may obtain that which we call the gift of prayer, or an ability to pray properly on all occasions. In the prayers that are composed for young persons, I have endeavoured for the most part to follow the same rules as before; except only that I have with more freedom admitted various modes of expression of a little higher rank; supposing that as persons are grown up to maturer years, they are capable of understanding the common forms of speech, which are used in scripture, and in the language of our public worship, which is chiefly adapted to the understanding of grown persons, rather than of children. In the shorter forms of occasional confession, petition or thanksgiving, &c. I have endeavoured so to contrive them, that they may be wrought into the body of other prayers, or may be used alone at proper seasons.

X. Since I have in all this work aimed at brevity and plainness, I hope my friends will excuse me, that I have not drawn out any of the devout sentiments here expressed into large and pathetic forms of expression: This I confess would have added more life and spirit to each composure, and perhaps might have had its use to awaken the pious passions into a warmer exercise. But then every prayer must have been much longer, and I considered for whose use they were written. Children must not be overburdened and tired, when we would allure them to the practices of early piety.

If any persons desire to see patterns of devotion, wherein pious sentiments are drawn out into more copious and affecting language, they may find something of this kind in the devotional writings of Bishop Patrick, Mr. Dorrington, Mr. Merriton, Mr. Jenks, and the author of the Christian Monitor, and several others, which may be of excellent use to teach younger christians what to pray for, and in what manner to express themselves. And above all, I would recommend to them the late Mr. Henry's method of prayer, where the devout expressions of the holy men of God, in scripture, are ranged under a variety of heads or common places, suited to the several parts of prayer, and the different occasions of the christian life: On this occasion also I would recommend Mr. Bennet's Christian Oratory as an excellent work; and Mr. Murrey has given good examples of closet devotions on the principal heads of divinity in the expressions of scripture. But for me to have dwelt long on each devout sentiment, would have been inconsistent with my design in this book.

It would be endless to give a full account of all the reasons that inclined me to frame and express the particular parts of every one of these composures, in the manner in which I have done it. There is scarce one word, in all these forms, which I have not set down, and reviewed with some care, and committed to the perusal of some of my friends. Yet after all my diligence and solicitude to serve the interests of religion in the best manner I could, and to please all pious persons in this part of the education of their children, I foresee some scruples which will arise, a few of which it may not be improper to relieve, or at least to attempt it.

Perhaps some persons may object and say, That children should not be taught to use the words, *Our God, our Father, our Saviour*, lest it raise in them a notion of their own personal interest in God and Christ, as their God, their Father, their Saviour, without due grounds, and before they have any thing of serious religion begun in their hearts.

To this I answer, there is a very good sense wherein these words, Our God, our Father, our Saviour, may be used without implying that peculiar interest in God or Christ, which belongs only to real inward christians. Is not God our God, and our common Father, as we are creatures and the works of his hands? Is he not the *God of the spirits of all flesh*, as well as the *Father of spirits?* Num. xxvii. 16. Heb. xii. 9. Is he not our God, whom we own and adore by prayer and praise, and all divine worship, in opposition to idols, and to the gods of other nations? *Psalm* cxv. 3. Is not *God the Saviour of all men, but especially of those who believe?* 1 Tim. iv. 10. Was not Judas, among the rest of the apostles, taught to say, *Our Father which art in heaven?* Are not Moses and the prophets full of such expressions? Do they not tell all the nation of the Jews, that God is their Father and their God, their Saviour and Redeemer, though thousands of vicious persons were among them, who had no inward spiritual relation to God, as their God and Father or Saviour? From all which we may infer, that these appropriative words, our God, our Father, and our Saviour, do not necessarily imply a personal interest in the special love of God, or the salvation of Christ, but a general relation to God as his creatures; or a general relation to Christ as a part of mankind, whose nature he assumed, and whom he came to save; or as parts of a nation professing the one God and the religion of Christ.

But here I would observe once for all, that wheresoever any word, expression, or sentence, is not agreeable to the taste or sentiment of parents or teachers, or not suitable to the case or circumstances of the child, it is a very easy matter with a pen to blot it out, and to put in what they please instead of it in the margin: Or if what I have written, may but encourage and excite them to compose other and better prayers for their children, I have attained my end and shall rejoice in it.

Another objection is this, *viz.* That several of these prayers are too long for children to learn by heart at those respective ages, for which these prayers are designed; and if they use them in worship, they can do nothing but read them for a great while at least.

Answer I. I had a desire to insert into the prayers of every day, most of the necessary and important things of practical religion, that I could suppose children of those different ages might apprehend; and though I ever kept my designed brevity in my eye, yet this desire has drawn them to such a length: But I am well persuaded, that almost all children of those ages, with a moderate share of capacity, may be taught by degrees to retain those different prayers in their memory, if they are first taught to understand them well. I confess, if they must learn them merely by rote, without any understanding, that is a hard task indeed, and what I would never impose upon any man, woman, or child. It is hard work to learn any set of words without a meaning to them:

And there is as little religion in it, as there is reason, though the words, with their proper meaning, may carry never so much reason and religion in them.

II. If some of the prayers for children and youth be too long, it is easy for the parent to strike out the sentences which are less necessary, or to include them in two brackets, thus [ ], and let the child omit them. And thus also in the prayers for young persons, which I am sensible are too long, every one may leave out what they please, for they are supposed by this time, at least, to be capable, in some measure, of determining what is most suitable to their present sentiments and circumstances.

But I answer thirdly, Where would be the crime of it, if children and young persons should read over these prayers, seriously, in a way of worship to God every morning and every night, while they are learning them by heart? Must there not be a time to learn their prayers, though they were never so short? And why may not the serious and solemn repetition of them, morning and evening, with their hearts lifted up to God, assist their memory to retain them the sooner? Must they be bound to rise every morning and lie down every evening without any acknowledgment of God, till they can say a prayer perfect without book? There may be some few memories so very feeble, that perhaps, at seven years old, they could hardly retain and repeat with constancy and perfection the young child's, or even the infant's prayers for morning and evening: And is this a sufficient reason why they should never pray to God, or praise him, till they arrive at that age.

I am verily persuaded, that the youngest child that can be instructed to understand these prayers, might hear the father or the mother read the sentences over one after another, and without offence to God, might religiously repeat them after their parents, in a solemn manner addressing themselves to him. This is the usual way whereby mothers teach their young children to get any lesson by heart: And I cannot but think that these young essays of devotion, practised in this manner, would be very pleasing to God; and the infant worshippers would be accepted at the mercy-seat, through the intercession of Jesus our great High-Priest. It is not our own composing of a prayer, nor the reading of a prayer composed, nor the saying of it over without book, or repeating it after another, that is either necessary or sinful in itself: But it is the understanding and inward desire and affection accompanying the words, that render the work of prayer pleasing to God: And it is the want of that understanding, desire, and affection, that will spoil all pretences to devotion, whether the words be read or said without book.

Yet I must own, it is far better to get such prayers by heart, than always to continue reading them, upon many accounts: For by this means, children will be able to pray at any time, when they have no book near them, or when they are in the dark and cannot see to read. Hereby also children will treasure up a variety of sacred matter and devout language, which will furnish their minds for prayer in their growing years, and will be afterward of use to them upon all occasions; for, as I have intimated before, so I repeat it again, I would not, by any means, confine persons to any set forms, whensoever

they are capable of praying pertinently without them; but I would willingly help them onward to attain this capacity, at the same time that I assist the devotions of their childhood.

And may the good Spirit of God make these composures useful, to draw the hearts of children near to the throne of grace, and to train up their tender age in a constant course of religious worship, till he shall instruct them to pour out their souls before God in more free and various addresses, according to the variety of their occasions and circumstances! And may our lips and our souls, at all ages of life, converse with God by prayer, with fervency and divine profit, in this sinful world of wants and sorrows, till we arrive at the happy regions of joy and praise! *Amen.*

PRAYERS

COMPOSED FOR

THE USE AND IMITATION OF CHILDREN.

PRAYERS FOR INFANTS AT THREE OR FOUR YEARS OLD.

THE INFANT'S MORNING PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, the Maker of every thing in heaven and earth, the darkness goes away, and the daylight comes at thy command: Thou art good, and thou doest good continually.—I thank thee, that thou hast taken such care of me this night, and that I am alive and well this morning.—Save me, O Lord, from evil all this day long, and let me love and serve thee for ever, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son. *Amen.*

THE INFANT'S EVENING PRAYER.

O LORD God, who knowest all things, thou seest me by night as well as by day.—I pray thee, for Christ's sake, forgive me whatsoever I have done amiss this day, and keep me safe all this night, while I am asleep.—I desire to lie down under thy care, and to abide for ever under thy blessing, for thou art a God of all power and everlasting mercy. *Amen.*

Note, The most important things of religion, which can be conveyed into the understanding of a young child, are these, *viz.* that God made all things, and knows all things; that he sees us every where, and is able to help us; that he is gracious and merciful; that we want his protection and care by night and by day, to keep us from evil, and to make us always safe and happy: That we are sinful creatures, and want forgiveness, and that we stand in need of his grace and help to do our duty: That all blessings are to be sought of God by prayer; that he is to be praised for all the mercies that we receive; and that all our hope of acceptance is on the account of Jesus Christ the Son of God our Mediator. All which things I have comprised in very plain language, and very briefly in one or other of these two prayers for children in the very earliest years of life. It cannot be expected, that all the distinct parts of prayer should be particularly exemplified, in so narrow a compass, and for the youngest understandings. If parents desire that their children, as soon as ever they can pronounce words, should acknowledge God by prayer morning and evening, there is one sentence in each of these prayers for infants, which may serve for that purpose, *viz.*

FOR THE MORNING.

SAVE me, O Lord, from evil all this day long, and let me love and serve thee for ever.

FOR THE EVENING.

I PRAY thee, O Lord, forgive me whatsoever I have done amiss this day, and keep me safe all this night.

THE INFANT'S GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

BLESS me, O Lord, and let my food strengthen me to serve thee for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

THE INFANT'S GRACE AFTER MEAT.

I DESIRE to thank God, who gives me food to eat, every day of my life. *Amen.*

Note, Parents should take care to instruct their children what is meant by these common terms, grace before meat, and grace after meat, *viz.* that grace before meat is to ask of God that, by his power, he would make our food nourish us, and fit us for his service. And that grace after meat is to give thanks for the good provision which he makes for us continually.

I proceed to give some examples of prayer for young children, from four or five years old, to seven or eight. Here let it be observed, that I have made the infant's morning and evening prayer serve for the first sentences of the young child's daily prayers, that I might render this duty as easy as possible to young children, by only adding a few more petitions to what they had already learned.

THE YOUNG CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, the Maker of every thing in heaven and in earth, the darkness goes away, and the daylight comes at thy command: Thou art good, and thou doest good continually. I thank thee, that thou hast taken such care of me this night, and that I am alive and well this morning. Save me, O Lord, from evil all this day long, and let me love and serve thee for ever, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son. Bestow on me every good thing that I have need of for my body and my soul: Assist me, by thy Holy Spirit, to do thy will: Make me always afraid to offend thee, and let me live and die in thy favour. Hear the prayers of a child, O Lord, and pardon all my sins, because thy beloved Son died once on earth for sinful creatures, though he never sinned himself; and now he lives in heaven to pray* for them and save them: Let his name be praised for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

O LORD God, who knowest all things, thou seest me by night as well as by day: I pray thee for Christ's sake forgive me whatsoever I have done amiss this day, and keep me safe all this night while I am asleep: I desire to lie down under thy care, and to

* I had used the word intercede here, which signifies only to pray for another, but I feared that word was too hard for a child.

abide for ever under thy blessing, for thou art a God of all power and everlasting mercy. Bless all my friends as well as myself: Do good to them at all times and all places, and help me always to serve them in love. And when I have done thy will here, by thy grace assisting me, and enjoyed thy blessings on earth, then give my soul a place in heaven, to dwell with thee there, and with thy Son Jesus Christ: For heaven and earth, and all things in them, are thine for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Note, I should here have chosen rather the doxology of the Lord's Prayer, but I feared that young children would not so well understand it.

THE YOUNG CHILD'S GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

I ENTREAT thee, O God, that the good things which I eat and drink may keep me alive, and make me able to do thee some service, for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy Son and our Saviour. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG CHILD'S GRACE AFTER MEAT.

I THANK thee, O heavenly Father, for my daily food, and for every blessing thou bestowest on me: Accept my thanksgivings for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

I proceed now to the examples of prayer, composed for children, from eight years old to ten or twelve.

THE CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

GREAT and gracious God, who hast created all things by thy power, and governest all things by thy wisdom; thou art the Author of all our blessings by day and night, I give thanks to thy Majesty that thou hast given me rest the night past, and that I am brought safe to see another morning.

Preserve me this day, O Lord, from every thing that may do me hurt; and wheresoever I am, let me remember the great God sees me, that I may not dare to sin against him.

I praise thee, that I have parents* and friends to provide food and clothes for me, and every thing else that I want: Do them good, I beseech thee, both here and hereafter; and give me grace daily to learn what they teach me, and willingly to do what they command me, that I may please them in all things, and live as becomes one of thy children. I would praise thee also, O God, that thou hast given us so good a king in this nation: Bless him and the royal family with all proper blessings, and keep us all in peace.

I deserve no good thing from thee, because I offend thee so often; but I desire to be sorry for my sins, and I pray and hope thou wilt spare me, and shew me thy love, because thou art a God of mercy, and because Jesus Christ thy Son died upon the cross to save such children as I am from the pains of hell. Now he is gone up to heaven to plead with God for them, and to bless them: Grant, O Lord, that I may see his face there hereafter, and sing his praises. To thee, O Father, to thy Son and thy Holy Spirit, I desire to pay all honour and obedience, now and evermore. *Amen.*

* Here, and in all other places where parents and kindred are mentioned, it is necessary that children be taught to name only such kindred as they have living.

THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

O Lord our heavenly Father, thou hast made the night for us to take our rest, I pray thee look down upon me, and watch over me while I sleep; for if thou take care of me, I need be afraid of nothing. Accept the thanks of a child, for all the good things that I have this day received; and as I lie down in peace this evening, so let me awake and rise again in peace in the morning, to serve thee. Thou seest and hearest every thing that I have said or done all this day: O pardon every one of my faults, and be not angry with me, for thy Son Jesus Christ has suffered death for our sins, and I desire to trust in him to save me from thy anger. Let me learn to know thee while I am a child, and begin to fear thee, and love thee, and to do thy will with delight; and I humbly ask that thy Holy Spirit may instruct and assist me in all things needful for me to know and to do. Help me to honour my father and mother, to obey all my teachers and governors, to love my brothers and sisters, my friends and neighbours, as I would have them love me: Let me not be an enemy to any person whatsoever, and suffer not others to be enemies to me. I entreat thee, O Lord, for Christ's sake, give me every thing that is best both for my soul and body, for thou art wise and gracious, and able to do better things for me than I am able to ask. And when I have served thee to my utmost in this world, then take my soul to live with thee in heaven, where I shall serve thee far better than I can do on earth, and give thee glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE CHILD'S OR YOUTH'S PRAYER FOR THE LORD'S-DAY MORNING.

To be used just after the other Morning Prayer.

O God of power and grace, who hast raised thy Son Jesus from the dead, the first day of the week, I pray thee raise my thoughts this day up to heaven, where Jesus Christ is. Thou hast taught me to call it the Lord's Day. O may I serve my Lord Jesus much upon his own day, and get more knowledge of him continually. Let me know him as the Son of God and the Son of man, whose name is Emmanuel, or God with us, who redeemed sinners with the price of his own blood. Let me love to hear and to read of God and Christ, and the things of heaven: Make me delight in thy worship, and learn what I must believe, and what I must do to be saved from hell. Whether I am at church or at home, let me lay aside both work and play from morning to night, that I may honour thee in the best manner I am able; and if I should die while I am a child, send thy blessed angels to carry me up to the holy and happy children in heaven, for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy best beloved Son. *Amen.*

THE CHILD'S OR YOUTH'S PRAYER FOR THE LORD'S-DAY EVENING.

To be used just after the other Evening Prayer.

Most holy and most merciful God, who hast given us this day chiefly to hear thy word, to pray to thee, and to praise thee, I thank thee that I have friends to teach me the knowledge of God the Father, and of his only Son Jesus Christ our Saviour; and that thou

givest us thy holy scriptures, and sendest thy ministers to shew us the way to heaven. Remember not against me, O Lord, the transgressions of this day, but make me remember some of the good things I have heard or read at home or abroad, that I may hate every sin, and be more careful to perform thy commands. Let me hope in thy mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ thy Son, in this world, and sing thy praises among thy saints and holy angels in the world to come. *Amen.*

THE CHILD'S GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

I BESEECH thee, O Lord, that the food, which thou providest for me, may strengthen me to perform my daily duties; and as thou preservest my life, let it be spent in thy fear, for the sake of thy Son our blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

THE CHILD'S GRACE AFTER MEAT.

MAKE me truly thankful, O Lord, for my daily bread, and for all other mercies which I receive; and help me to love and serve thee, the Giver of all good, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

When children are ten or twelve years old, according to their different capacities, they may be taught to understand the several parts of prayer, as I have distinguished them in the following composures; and for this purpose, I have here given a short account of these distinct parts of prayer, by way of question and answer. A much larger and fuller account of them may be seen in my treatise, called, *A Guide to Prayer.*

Note, I have not written this Catechism for all children to learn it by heart, but that parents may teach them hereby to understand the nature of the great duty of prayer.

A CATECHISM TO TEACH CHILDREN TO PRAY, OR INSTRUCTIONS IN THE DUTY OF PRAYER, BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

1 QUESTION.

TELL me, my dear child, do you know what it is to pray to God?

Answer. To pray, is to ask the great and merciful God to bestow on me the good things which I want.

2 *Q.* But doth prayer mean no more than this?

A. Prayer sometimes signifies our speaking to God in a religious manner about any thing that concerns either him or us, or the rest of his creatures.

3 *Q.* What are the chief parts of prayer?

A. The chief parts of prayer are these eight, *viz.* Invocation, adoration, confession, petition, pleading, self-resignation, thanksgiving, and blessing; all which are contained in this short verse:

Call upon God, adore, confess,
Petition, plead, and then declare
You are the Lord's, give thanks and bless,
And let Amen conclude the prayer.

4 *Q.* What do you mean by invocation?

A. Invocation is a calling upon God, or beginning to speak to him, by some of his most holy names or titles, such as, "O Lord God; Almighty God, my Maker and my Governor; Most holy and most gracious Lord our God; Most merciful Father; Our Father who art in heaven; O Lord, most high and most holy; The Creator of heaven and earth; The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in and through him our God and our Father."

5 *Q.* What is adoration, or the second part of prayer?

A. To adore God is to think highly of him, and to speak humbly to him of the high esteem which we have of his nature and of his works.

6 *Q.* How must we adore God on the account of his nature?

A. By making mention of some of the attributes or perfections of his nature, such as his greatness, his power, his wisdom, his holiness and justice, his goodness and the rest.

7 *Q.* Can you give me some instances of all these?

A. First, If I adore his greatness, I say, "Thou art very great, and greatly to be feared. Thou art high above all our thoughts. There is none like thee, there is none that can compare with thee. Thy glory reaches above the heavens. All creatures are as nothing before thee. Thy thoughts are high above our thoughts, as the heavens are above the earth."

Secondly, If I adore his power, I say, "Thou art Almighty, and canst do what thou pleasest in the upper and the lower worlds. Thou art able to do far above what we can ask or think. If thou wilt work, none shall hinder. Who can resist thy hand? Who can lift up himself against God and prosper?"

Thirdly, If I adore his wisdom, I say, "Thou art the only wise God, excellent in counsel, and wonderful in working. Thy ways are unsearchable, and thy judgments are a great deep. All things are known to thee, even the secret thoughts of our hearts. Thou seest us at all times, nor can darkness hide us from thine eyes."

Fourthly, If I adore God on the account of his holiness and justice, I say, "Thou art most holy in thy nature, and hatest all sin. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with approbation, and sinners shall not dwell with thee. Thou art a just God, a righteous Governor, and wilt not suffer thy laws to be broken without divine resentment. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark and punish our iniquities, according to their desert, no flesh could stand before thee; thy wrath would burn to the lowest hell."

Fifthly, If I adore the goodness of God, I say, "Thou art good, O Lord, and dost good; thy tender mercies are over all thy works. Thy loving-kindness is exceeding great, and thy compassions are new every morning. How gracious is our God, and how rich in mercy to all that call upon him! Thou art a God hearing prayer, therefore we come to thee in all our distresses. As a father pitieth his children, so thou pitiest them that fear thee. Thou art long-suffering and slow to anger, and there is hope of forgiveness with thee."

8 *Q.* You have given a good account how God must be adored, on the account of his

glorious nature and attributes: Tell me now in what manner you would adore him on the account of his works?

A. By speaking honourably of him, because of his works of creation, providence and grace, in our addresses to him.

9 *Q.* Will you give me some instances of this also?

A. First, If I adore God for his works of creation, I say, "Thou, O Lord, hast formed the heavens and the earth, and all things that are in them. Thou didst bring all things out of nothing by the word of thy mouth. Thou hast created all things by Jesus Christ thy Son. Thou hast made and fashioned me by thy power, and formed me for thy service. Thou hast made the sun to give light by day, and the moon and stars to relieve the darkness of the night."

Secondly, If I adore God for his works of providence, I say, "Thy wise and powerful providence preserves and governs all the works of thy hands. Thou rulest in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Thou providest all things necessary for our life and support. Wise and righteous are all thy ways, though they are above our reach."

Thirdly, If I adore God for the works of his grace, I do it in this manner: "Though thou beholdest all the offences, and the provoking crimes of mankind, yet thou hast withheld thy vengeance, and manifested thy grace. How wonderful is that love of thine, which sent thy own Son to save a lost and miserable world? How many thousand sinners hast thou pardoned, and there is yet more pardoning mercy to be found with thee. How glorious is the grace which thou hast offered in thy gospel to creatures who had affronted thee by many rebellions! How long has thy love waited upon us, while we have continued in our iniquities! Thou hast provided a rich salvation, and a thousand blessings, and put them into the hands of Jesus our Saviour, that he might distribute them to such unworthy creatures as we. What tongues of men or angels can adore thee answerable to such mercy?"

Note, There are several more particulars on the account of which God may be adored, such as his eternity, his unchangeableness, his faithfulness, his covenant of grace, his promises, &c. But these are sufficient for a pattern of adoration.

10 *Q.* What is the third part of prayer, or confession?

A. It is an acknowledgment that we are not only mean and inconsiderable creatures in his sight, but that we are also guilty sinners, and that therefore we deserve punishment, and not blessings, at the hands of God.

11 *Q.* In what manner may children confess their meanness as creatures?

A. In such expressions as these: "Lord, my original is from the dust of the earth, and I am not worthy to lift up my face toward heaven. I am but a child, and know little of thee, and can do but little for thee. I deserve nothing at thy hands, I can only cry for thy free favour and blessing."

12 *Q.* How are we to confess our sins?

A. First, In general thus: "We are born in sin, and we have too long lived in it. Our iniquities are many, though our years are few. Our transgressions witness against us, O God, they are more than we can number: We have sinned always against a gracious God, and we have sinned too often against the light of our consciences. I have deserved that thy anger should fall heavy on me, because of my manifold offences. I am

a sinful creature both by nature and by practice: I have broken thy holy commands in thought, word and deed, and therefore I have deserved death and hell. Shouldst thou have punished me for ever, thou wouldst have been ever righteous, but I must have been miserable without hope. I can never make any recompence to God for all the dishonours I have done him, therefore I lie at the foot of his mercy."

Secondly, We may make particular confessions of sins that we have committed, of our carelessness or neglect of duties, and of the particular aggravations of our crimes, as being done against knowledge, against many warnings, &c.

13 *Q.* What do you mean by petition, which is the fourth part of prayer?

A. To make a petition to God is to ask him for mercies, either for soul or for body, for ourselves or for others.

14 *Q.* What mercies do you want for your soul, which are called spiritual blessings?

A. "I want a saving knowledge of God the Father, and true faith in his Son Jesus Christ the Saviour. I want true repentance, and to have my heart made sincerely sorry for all my offences. I want pardon of sin, and to be received into the favour of God, and have a name and place among his children. I want to be translated from my old estate of sin and guilt, and to be brought into the privileges of the new covenant through Christ Jesus. Oh that I might be made a new creature, and converted sincerely to God in my younger years, before sin, and Satan, and this world, have taken faster hold of me! I want to have my sinful nature made holy by the powerful working of the Spirit of God in me: Oh that I were changed from a vain and evil temper into a spiritual, holy, and heavenly disposition! I want to have all wicked thoughts and sinful desires and passions subdued, that I may love God and man as I ought, and perform my duty better to them. I would beg of God to direct me in all my ways, and to preserve me from every temptation and snare. Oh that I might be carried safely through all the dangers and troubles of this life, be prepared for death, and at be last brought safe to heaven!"

15 *Q.* What mercies do you want for your body, or for this life, which are called temporal blessings?

A. "This body of mine wants daily food and raiment to preserve its life: It wants health and strength to do my proper work: It wants protection from dangers every day, and sleep and safety every night: And I want a continual divine blessing on my labours and studies, and on all my concerns in this world, that they may turn to my present and future benefit."

16 *Q.* Since you have given so large an account of what you want for yourself, tell me what petitions you should offer to God for others, which is properly called intercession?

A. I should pray for my parents, my kindred and friends, for my teachers and rulers, that proper blessings may be bestowed on them all, and that myself and others may be made wise and happy under their care. I should pray even for my enemies, that God would give them true repentance and forgiveness. I should pray for all ranks and degrees of men, for Jews, Turks and heathens, that they may be led into the way of truth and salvation, and especially for the christian nations and the church of Christ in the world, that being delivered from the fear of their enemies, they may grow in grace, in holiness and comfort.

17 *Q.* What is the fifth part of prayer, which is called pleading with God?

A. To plead with God in prayer, is to use arguments in an humble manner with God to bestow mercy on us.

18 *Q.* What particular arguments are proper to use with God in praying to him?

A. We may plead with God to bestow mercy, because our wants and sorrows are very great, because God alone can help us, because he is a God of infinite goodness and compassion, because he has made many gracious promises to those that call upon him, or because he has shewn favour to ourselves or others in the like case; and thus we may suit our particular arguments to our particular occasions.

19 *Q.* What is the great and general argument to use with the great God, in order to obtain mercy?

A. The name and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, are a most powerful plea for sinful creatures to use before a holy God, in such language as this: "Hear me, O Lord, and answer my prayers for the sake of Jesus thy beloved Son. Has he not suffered and died on earth, to procure these blessings for such sinners as I am? Does he not live in heaven to intercede and plead with thee for poor unworthy creatures on earth? Oh may Jesus, our great High-Priest above, make our prayers and our praises acceptable to God our Father!

20 *Q.* What is the sixth part of prayer, that is, self-dedication or resignation?

A. It is a yielding up our souls and bodies to God as our God, in and through the mediation of Jesus Christ, together with a profession of our humble and holy resolution to be the Lord's for ever. This may be done in such expressions as these: "Lord, I was given up to thee by my parents in my youngest years, I was devoted to thee by christian baptism* in the early part of my life, and I humbly hope that I am willing to confirm these obligations, and to give myself up to thee now, to be thine in an everlasting covenant. If I had ever any solemn thoughts and concerns about my soul, I here repeat and confirm all my serious transactions with thy Majesty. I humbly lay hold on thy covenant of grace, and surrender myself to thee as my Lord and my God, to rule me and dispose of me, according to this covenant. I renounce all my sins, and devote myself to be thy servant: I renounce all other Saviours, and commit myself, soul and body, into the hands of Christ as my only Saviour and my Lord."

21 *Q.* What is meant by thanksgiving, which is the seventh part of prayer?

A. Thanksgiving implies a grateful sense of the goodness of God to us, together with an humble acknowledgment made to God, and praise offered to him, on account of all the blessings we enjoy here, and all that we hope for hereafter; and that not only for such blessings as we have prayed for, but for such also as were bestowed on us without our asking.

22 *Q.* What blessings do we thank God for, which were freely bestowed without our asking for them?

A. If we look so far backward as to ages before we were born, we may give thanks to God, even for his eternal counsels of peace, in order to the salvation of fallen man, and for his sacred transactions with Christ Jesus, for our recovery before the world began, or before man had actually sinned: We may bless his name, for sending his only-begotten Son into our world, to die for such guilty and helpless creatures as we were, and for revealing these wonders of mercy to mankind in the holy scripture.

* Those who were not baptised in their infancy know how to omit such expressions as these in prayer.

But particularly, we should praise God that we were born and brought up in a land where the gospel is preached; that we have had a religious education under the care of our parents or other friends; that we were not bred up to worship idols of gold and silver, of wood or stone; that we were not destroyed from our very childhood, but suffered to live and grow up to the knowledge of "the only true God, and Jesus Christ his Son, whom to know is the way to eternal life;" *John* xvii. 3. that we have our senses and limbs, and our right understanding given us, and continued to us, even before we were capable of taking notice of these blessings.

23 *Q.* How must we thank God for those mercies which we have asked of him?

A. These are either spiritual or temporal blessings, for ourselves or for others; we may look back to the fourth part of prayer or petition, and see a more particular account of them; and if we have received any of them as a special answer to our prayers, we then say, "We praise thee, O Lord, that thou hast condescended to hearken to our requests, and to grant us this favour."

24 *Q.* What is blessing or doxology, which usually concludes our prayers?

A. This consists chiefly in ascribing glory and majesty, praise and honour to God, as his eternal due, and wishing the everlasting continuance of his honours among his creatures.

25 *Q.* In what manner should we offer this doxology or blessing?

A. Doxologies are usually offered in some such expressions as these, *viz.* "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. *Amen.* To God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever. To him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to his mighty power, to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen.* To him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. *Amen.* Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. *Amen.* To God the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer, and to the Holy Spirit our Comforter, be everlasting honour and praise. *Amen.* To thee, O Father, to thy Son, and thy blessed Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.* To God our Maker, our Saviour and our Sanctifier, let all creatures give eternal praises. *Amen.*

Or upon the mention of the name of Christ, toward the end of the prayer, we may add, To him that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.* Or, To whom be glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.* Or, To whom, with the Father, and his eternal Spirit, be honour, glory and praise, without end. *Amen.*

26 *Q.* What is the real difference between these three parts of prayer, adoration, thanksgiving, and the doxology or blessing, since praise belongs to all of them?

A. Adoration is chiefly an ascribing or offering praise to God, because of the glorious perfections of his own nature, or the greatness of his works, or sometimes on the account of his divine relations to his creatures.

Thanksgiving is the praise which is offered to God for some peculiar instances of goodness or mercy to men, and particularly to ourselves or our friends.

Doxology or blessing, in its complete sense, implies not only an ascription of praise and

glory, but also an acknowledgment of the dueness of it, and a desire of the eternal continuance of his honours among his creatures.

27 *Q.* What is the meaning of the word *Amen* at the end of your prayers?

A. The word *Amen* in the Hebrew signifies truth, or surely: And it is the same thing as if we said, so it is, and so let it be. By this word we declare that our hearts confirm all the foregoing expressions of our lips; and that we desire and hope for the acceptance of our petitions and our praises.

28 *Q.* Are all these parts of prayer necessary to be insisted on every time we pray to God?

A. No, by no means: For we should shorten or lengthen our prayers, and frame our thoughts and expressions according to our particular cases and occasions. But all these parts are mentioned here, that we might learn to know every thing that belongs to the duty of prayer; and indeed most or all these parts of prayer may be very frequently used in our addresses to God.

29 *Q.* Is it necessary to put the several parts of prayer in this method and order?

A. Neither is this nor any other certain method necessary: But the several parts of prayer are mentioned here in this order, because it seems most natural and easy to young beginners in religion. A great variety of methods will be easily learned and practised afterwards, when christians arrive at greater acquaintance with divine things, and attain further skill in this necessary and daily part of divine worship.

Note here, 1. In the prayers for children I have not followed this method, nor put in all the parts of prayer so particularly, because I endeavoured to contrive every thing in them in the shortest manner. Note 2. In the prayers for youth I have left out the sixth part of prayer, which is called self-dedication or resignation, partly because few children are come so far in the practice of religion, and partly because I would shorten every thing as far as possible. Under the head of pleading also, I have mentioned no other argument but that of the name and merit of Christ. Note 3. After the prayers for young persons, I have particularly shewn how to vary and change the methods of prayer, and to dispose the several parts of this duty into a variety of forms. Having laid down so many directions relating to prayer in the foregoing Catechism, I proceed now to furnish the pious and well-inclined youth with some examples of the practice.

PRAYERS FOR YOUTH OF TEN OR TWELVE YEARS OF AGE.

THE YOUTH'S MORNING PRAYER.

Invocation. Blessed God, my heavenly Father.

Adoration. It was thy power that formed me at first, and thy goodness has preserved me all my life to this morning.

Confession. I confess I am a sinful child; I know but little of thee, and can do but little for thee; and though I was given up to thee betimes, even from my infancy,* yet I

* This sentence may most properly be used by those children who were devoted and given up to God by their parents, in christian baptism in their infancy.

have done much against thee in breaking thy commandments in my thoughts, my words, and my actions.

Petitions. 1. Have mercy upon me, O most gracious God, and forgive me freely all my sins and follies. Let thy Holy Spirit teach me to know thee better, and turn my heart entirely to God in my younger years, that I may not grow old in sin. Help me to obey all thy commands, to fear thy threatenings, to trust in thy promises, and hope in thy mercy, as it is revealed to us through Christ Jesus in the gospel.

2. Make me able and willing to learn and remember the things that are taught me; nor let me spend my time in sport and trifling when I should be better employed.

3. Let me be careful to tell the truth always, and abhor lying. Suffer not my lips to speak evil of others, nor my heart to wish any mischief to them, nor my hands to do them injury.

4. Keep me from wicked companions, that I may not learn any of their sinful ways: For I would fear to say or to do any thing that may displease thee.

5. Provide for me, O Lord, food and raiment; bestow on me daily all the good things that I want, and save me from evils of every kind.

6. But if thou sendest sickness, pain, or sorrow upon me, enable me to bear it with patience, and to repent of my sins, which have made God angry with me.

7. And though I am young, let me so think of dying as to prepare for it every day of my life, that I may stand before the judgment-seat of Christ with good hope when he calls me to account for what I have done.

8. Bless all our rulers, that the whole nation may be happy under their care. Bless my parents and teachers; help me to obey them cheerfully in what they command, and submit to them when they reprove me.

9. Do good to all my relations, make them wise and happy; and let me shew my love to all persons, by doing to them as I would have them to do to me.

Thanksgiving. Accept my sincere and humble thanks, O Lord, for all thy works of mercy towards the children of men. I desire to praise thee, for sending thy Son Jesus Christ to save us, and for all the promises of thy grace, which are written in thy gospel. I thank thee particularly for all the mercies I have received since I was born; that I was brought up in the knowledge of the true religion; that I have enjoyed so much health and comfort in this world, and that thou hast let no evil befal me this night, but hast caused me to sleep and awake in peace.

Pleading in the name of Christ. Though I have sinned, and have not deserved thy love, yet I entreat thee to remember what thy dear Son Jesus Christ has done, and what he has suffered for such sinful creatures as I am. Love and save me, O God, for his sake; carry me through this world safely, and bring me hereafter to that blessed world where he is.

Doxology or blessing. Now to the great and glorious God our Father, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier, be honour and praise to all eternity. *Amen.*

Or thus: To God the Father, to his Son, and his Holy Spirit, be praise and glory for ever. *Amen.*

Or thus more at large: Now to God the Father, who made us at first, to the Son of God, who died to save us from hell, and to the Spirit of God, who maketh us fit for heaven, let all honour, praise, and obedience be given here and hereafter. *Amen.*

THE YOUTH'S EVENING PRAYER.

Invocation. Most high and most holy God.

Adoration. Thou dwellest in the upper world, where there is no night, but thou seest us in the dark, and knowest all things: Thou lovest the children that serve thee, and pray to thee; but thou art angry with them that forget God, and practise iniquity.

Confession. I would be grieved for every thing that I have spoken or done to offend thee this day or all my life; and yet I find myself so ready to offend thee every day, that I am angry with myself, and am ashamed before thee.

Petitions. 1. Lord, pardon all my sins, and send me not to hell for them; but give me more knowledge and more grace, that wherein I have done amiss to-day, I may do better on the morrow.

2. Help me to remember my Creator in the days of my youth. Let me think often of God and heavenly things, and never forget the most useful lessons that are taught me daily.

3. Bestow the best blessings of heaven and earth on my dear father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and bless all my kindred. Bless our most excellent king, with the whole family of princes. Preserve the protestant religion among us, and let ministers and people be all taught of God.

4. Make me love my friends with most hearty affection: Let me do good to all, and never hate them that hurt me, but forgive them, as I hope God will forgive me.

5. Watch over me all this night, and stand by me while I sleep, and then no evil can come near me: Cause me to awake in the morning in health and safety; and whensoever my body dies, let my soul live for ever in thy heavenly kingdom.

Thanksgiving. Oh! that I could praise thee, as I should do, for the mercies which relate to my soul as well as my body; I would praise thee for my life and my health, for my daily bread and my clothing, for friends who provide for me and instruct me, and for every good thing that thou givest me by night and by day in this world, and for any hopes of happiness in the world to come.

Pleading in the name of Christ. Lord, hear the prayers of a poor child, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son, for he encouraged children to come to him when he was on earth, that he might bless them. Here he died to procure the blessing for them, and he lives in heaven to bestow it. Oh! may I meet him with joy when he returns to raise the dead, and to judge all the world.

Doxology or blessing. Now to him that is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think, be glory through Jesus Christ to all ages. *Amen.*

Or, this doxology may be here used, viz. Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

Or, if the next doxology be more pleasing: Worthy is the Son of God, who is the Lamb that was slain, to receive blessing and praise, and honour and glory, from every creature in heaven and earth. *Amen.*

The youth's prayer for the Lord's Day morning and evening is the same with the child's,

so that I need not repeat it here. Or, if parents desire a new prayer for their children on the Lord's Day, when they are grown a little older, they may teach them to use that which is made for several children or youths in company, changing *we* into *I*, and *us* into *me*, and *our* into *my* or *mine*, and *are* into *am*, *&c.* And I would here give notice also, that all those prayers and graces, which are composed for one single child, may be used by several children together, if their teachers will change the little words, *I* into *we*, and *me* into *us*, and *my* or *mine* into *our*, and *am* into *are*, *&c.*

THE YOUTH'S GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

O God, my Maker and my Preserver, thou art graciously pleased to appoint thy various creatures to become food for me, though I am very unworthy: I entreat thee, that my health and strength may be maintained thereby, that I may serve thee with more care and diligence every day of my life, for the sake of Christ our blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

THE YOUTH'S GRACE AFTER MEAT.

To thee, O Lord, I render my humble and hearty thanks for all the mercies I enjoy, and for the food which I have now received. Let the thanksgivings of my lips be attended with obedience in my life, and let both be presented by Jesus Christ thy Son, and accepted of God our Father in heaven. *Amen.*

A MORNING PRAYER FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN IN COMPANY.

Invocation. Great and glorious God, the eternal and almighty King.

Adoration. Thou hast made the sun in the skies to give light by day, but thy throne is above the sun in the highest heaven; yet thy goodness takes notice of thy poor creatures on earth, and thou hearest when children pray to thee.

Confession. Look down, O Lord, and pity us; for we desire to be heartily sorry that we have so often offended thee, by breaking thy commandments; and when we are serious, we are grieved to think that we should be so ready to break them again.

Petitions. 1. Let not thy anger rise against us, O God of mercy, nor punish us as our faults and follies deserve, either in this world, or in the world to come. But when thou bringest pain or trouble upon us, let us be patient under it, and grow the better for it; always considering that sin is the cause of sorrow.

2. Send thy good Spirit into our hearts, to subdue our evil inclinations. Make us new creatures, and form us after the likeness of thy Son Jesus Christ.

3. Preserve us from the danger of evil company, and let us choose and love them that are wise and good: Nor suffer us to waste those hours in idleness or play, which are allotted for our learning or work.

4. Keep our hearts from malice and from evil thoughts: Preserve our tongues from lying and slandering, and all evil words; withhold our hands from fighting and stealing, and all evil actions: Guard our feet from running into mischief.

5. Let us dwell together in peace and love, and be ready to help one another at all times: Nor let us dare to sin against God in secret, remembering that we are always in his sight.

6. Grant us sufficient food and raiment while we live; encrease our strength daily. Secure us from sickness and from death in our younger days, that we may do much service for thee on earth; and when we die, and our bodies are carried to the grave, let our souls be taken up to live for ever with thee and with thy Son Jesus in the kingdom of glory.

7. We pray thee, bless all our dear and honoured relations and friends, and grant them those mercies that are proper for them here, and eternal life hereafter.

8. As we adore thy goodness, O Lord, in giving us a protestant king, so we ask thy richest blessings to descend on him, and on all the royal house. May all our rulers govern us wisely, and preserve us in peace and safety from enemies abroad and at home.

9. Give wisdom to all our teachers, that they may instruct us in what is best for us to know; assist us to learn every thing that is needful for us in this world, or that may help us in our way to heaven. And if our parents or governors see it necessary to correct us, let us not grow sullen, but meekly submit and take care to amend what we have done amiss.

Thanksgiving. We praise thee, O Lord, for all the blessings we have ever received, for they all come from thee. We give thee thanks for our rest the last night, and that we find ourselves in peace this morning; we bless thee for our sight and our hearing, for all our senses and our powers of mind and body; and above all, for the Holy Bible, which is thy word, and for all the helps that we enjoy in order to the salvation of our souls. Let us so carefully fulfil all our duties every day, that we may come with delight to worship thee when the evening returns.

Pleading in the name of Christ. Heavenly Father, accept all our prayers and praises, through the hands of Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, who died for such sinners as we are, and rose again, and went to heaven to plead for us there.

Doxology or conclusion. Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be ascribed to God our Father, who sitteth upon the throne, and to Jesus the Lamb of God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

AN EVENING PRAYER FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN TOGETHER IN COMPANY.

Invocation. O Lord God Almighty, the Creator of all things in heaven and earth.

Adoration. Thou hast appointed the night for rest, and thou watchest over thy children while they sleep, so that if we please thee, we need not be afraid of any thing that can hurt us. Thou seest us in the darkest hours, and knowest all that we think as well as all that we speak or do; therefore we would ever fear to sin against thee. Thou hast all power, and art rich in mercy; therefore we pray to thee for every thing that we want.

Confession. But we deserve no good thing from thy hands: We are brought into the world with sinful natures, and we have sinned grievously against God. Too often have we done the things which thou hast forbidden, and we have too often refused or neglected to do what thou hast commanded.

Petitions. 1. Forgive, we pray thee, all the evil words that we have spoken, and all the evil works that we have done, ever since we came into this world: Make us truly sorry

for all our sins, and let us repent of them heartily here on earth, that we may not be punished for them in hell. We are one day older than we were before; oh that we might be so much the wiser and better!

2. Gracious God, take care of us all this night, and raise us up again in the morning to get more knowledge of thee, and to do more service for thee. Let us daily be better prepared to appear before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come in the clouds to call the world to account before him.

3. May our dear and honoured parents be beloved of God, and let it be our constant delight to please them. Bless our kindred and friends, our governors and our teachers, the rulers of the nation, and the ministers of thy church: Shew great kindness to them who shew kindness to us: Forgive our enemies, and help us to forgive them, O Lord, as we hope and pray for thy forgiveness ourselves, and make us sincere in desiring their good who have done us much evil.

Thanksgiving. O most merciful God, we render our hearty thanks to thee for all the good things that we enjoy; we praise thee, that we have had food to nourish us this day, and have a bed to rest on this night; that we have a house to dwell in, and clothes to keep us warm; that we have friends who gave us up to thee in our youngest years,* and who take care to instruct us in things necessary for this life, who teach us also thy holy word, in order to guide us in the way to life everlasting.

Pleading in the name of Christ. Though our services are not worthy to come up before thee, yet our blessed Saviour knows what prayers we make: Oh that he would present them to God his Father, that they may be heard and answered for his sake, for it is our desire to trust in the Lord Jesus!

Doxology. To whom with the Father and his Holy Spirit, let us and all creatures pay everlasting honour. *Amen.*

A PRAYER FOR THE LORD'S DAY FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN OR YOUTHS IN COMPANY.

To be used just after the Morning Prayer.

O LORD our heavenly Father, thou hast appointed this day for thy own worship, and hast made it our duty to hear thy word, and to offer up our prayers and praises to thee. Keep us, we pray thee, from all vain and idle thoughts, words and actions. When we are taught the great truths of thy word, let us take pains to remember them, and obey all thy precepts. When we read or hear thy promises, let us firmly trust in them, and fear thy dreadful threatenings: Let us know what our sins are, that we may mourn for them; and let us learn who our Redeemer is, that we may love him, and give up ourselves to him as our King and our Saviour. Oh! that we might be better acquainted with him, who came down from heaven, and died on earth, to make satisfaction for our offences, and to save us from sin and hell, who rose again from the dead as on this day, and is gone before us to heaven, to prepare a place there for all his followers: To him be honour, and glory, and thanksgiving for ever. *Amen.*

* This sentence belongs only to those who have had pious parents or religious friends: But as this prayer is to be used in company, very probably this sentence will agree to the circumstances of the greatest part of the children.

A PRAYER FOR THE LORD'S DAY FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN OR YOUTHS TOGETHER IN COMPANY.

To be used just after the Evening Prayer.

O God of mercy, we give thanks to thee, that thou hast given us another day of grace, that we poor sinners may be acquainted with the way of salvation. O let thy Holy Spirit teach us over again the most useful things that thy word and thy ministers have taught us, and print them upon our minds, so that we may not forget them: Let us know more of thee, and love thee better all our lives, by what we have read or heard this day. Make us take delight, O Lord, in this sort of employment, and let us never grow weary of it, that we may be fitter for heaven, where saints and angels worship thee continually. The Lord pardon all the foolish thoughts we have had this day! If our hearts have been serious in any duty, we acknowledge it is the work of thy grace, and we praise thee for it, humbly hoping for the acceptance of our imperfect services, upon the account of the perfect obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ our blessed Redeemer. *Amen.*

GRACE BEFORE MEAT FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN TOGETHER.

Gracious God and Father, who out of thy rich bounty art pleased to make daily provision for us, we entreat thee, bless what we shall eat or drink at this time, that it may nourish us, and fit us to do all our duty cheerfully both to God and man, for the sake of Christ our Lord, and our Redeemer. *Amen.*

GRACE AFTER MEAT FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN TOGETHER.

We render thanks to thee, O Lord, for the food and refreshment which thou hast now given us. Help us to lay out our time and strength in doing thy will; and let our prayers and our services be presented to thee with acceptance, by the hands of Jesus Christ, thy Son and our Mediator. *Amen.*

I proceed next to the patterns of prayer, composed for young persons of fourteen or fifteen years of age, supposing them to be more capable of adding, omitting, or altering what they see fit, to suit their own case and occasions, and of forming other prayers for themselves according to these examples.

MORNING PRAYER FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

Invocation. O Lord God most High and most Holy, the Creator, the Governor and the Judge of all mankind.

Adoration. I adore thy Majesty, and worship thee with humble reverence: Thou art infinitely wise, powerful and gracious, far beyond our highest thoughts, and above all our praises. Thou hast made the daylight for the businesses of life, and hast raised me from the bed of sleep to see another morning with comfort.

Confession. I acknowledge before thee, I am utterly unworthy to come into thy holy

presence: My original is from the dust, and my iniquities have rendered me viler than the beasts that perish. I am by nature unholy and unclean; and though my years are but few, yet my sins are many; my daily actual transgressions witness against me, and deserve destruction from the hand of thy justice, so that I can make no pretence to merit before thy throne: But there is forgiveness with thee, that sinners may be encouraged to return to thee with hope and love.

Petitions for one's self. 1. Let thy mercy, O Lord, blot out all my offences, for the sake of the sufferings of thy beloved Son, and let a sinful creature find favour in thy sight, upon the account of his complete obedience, and his bloody death.

2. Pity me, O heavenly Father, under my natural blindness and ignorance. Instruct me by thy word and thy good Spirit, that I may know more of myself, and my own wants and weaknesses, and that I may know thee better in the discoveries of thy grace. Teach me the precepts of thy law, that I may learn what is my duty, and let me grow daily into an humble acquaintance with Christ Jesus, who is the righteousness, and the strength, and the life of his people.

3. Work in my heart sincere repentance for all my past offences, and let my faith in Jesus be such as thou wilt approve, such as may draw my heart near to God in holy love, and produce the good fruits of obedience in the whole course of my life. I would commit myself into his hands, as my only and my all-sufficient Saviour, to deliver me both from sin and from hell, and to bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.

4. Form my soul, O Lord, after thy holy image, which was lost by the sin of my first parents. Rectify all the irregular inclinations that are within me. Keep me from the power of unruly appetites, and from sudden and ungovernable passions of every kind. Help me to set a constant watch over all my senses, and the wandering imaginations of my heart. Suppress all undue resentments of whatsoever injuries I meet with: Let such a meek and serene temper be wrought in me, as appeared in my blessed Saviour here on earth, for I would fain be like him, and imitate his holy pattern. Kindle in my soul such a pious flame of love to God, and charity towards men, that I may make it my delight to do good to all, even to those who have done me hurt. But let my love, in a special manner, go out toward all those who bear thy image, and who love Jesus thy Son, whatsoever lesser differences of party, opinion or interest, may be between us.

5. And as I entreat thy grace to guard me from all youthful lusts, by its inward influences, so let thy kind providence secure me from the snares and temptations of this vain world, and from the daily occasions of sin, that iniquity may never get the victory over me. And if at any time I am more exposed to special dangers, in the circumstances of my life, the more let me experience the present aids of thy special grace, that I may be preserved from the defilements of the age and place where I dwell: Suffer me not to be led away by evil companions, to forsake the paths of truth and godliness; nor let me ever be afraid or ashamed to profess myself a worshipper of God, and a believer in Jesus.

6. Let health and peace be continued to me this day, and no evil occurrence attend me. Direct and incline my heart to employ every hour of my time aright, and enable me so to fulfil my various duties to God and man, that I may in some measure approve myself, in the evening, to the enquiries of my own conscience, and be approved by thee, my Judge, at the last day.

7. When thou seest it needful to correct me, O my God, let it be done in measure and in mercy, and let the fruit and effect thereof be to take away my sins, and to make me partaker of thy holiness.

Resignation. I resign myself up entirely to thy good pleasure, and to the conduct of thy wisdom, according to the covenant of thy grace. I desire to be thine in life and death, and in the world to come for ever.

Petitions for others. 1. Nor would I pray for myself only, but for all men, as thou hast taught me. Enlighten the whole earth with the light of thy gospel: Deliver those that are persecuted for righteousness sake, from the hands of those that hate them, and let the spirit of persecution be rooted out from among men: When shall the time come, O Lord, that the liberties of mankind, and of thy gospel, shall be asserted and vindicated by the rulers of this world? When shall it be, that the kings of all the earth shall bring their power and glory to support the cause of true religion?

2. I bless thee, O Lord, from my very soul, that thou hast bestowed on this my native land a protestant king, and that we enjoy our religious and civil privileges under his government: Enrich him with the choicest of thy blessings, that he may adorn the high station to which thou hast exalted him, with the exercise of every virtue, and may become an illustrious pattern of all goodness. Let the crown sit long and easy on his head. Establish his royal family and offspring in the earth, that in their successive seasons and stations they may become guards and ornaments to the protestant interest.

3. May all inferior rulers be directed by thy wisdom, and influenced by thy grace, that they may be made public blessings to this kingdom.

4. Maintain thy gospel in its power and glory: Let the ministry of thy word be attended with a rich supply of thy Spirit, that thy church on earth may be enlarged daily, and knowledge and holiness may increase and abound among men.

5. Look down in mercy on my dear relations and friends. Bless my parents and kindred with all the necessary gifts of providence and of grace. Manifest thy love to all those that love me, and enable me from my heart to forgive all that have done me hurt: Let them repent of their sins, O Lord, and be made partakers of thy forgiveness.

Pleading. Many are the favours I have requested of thee, O my God; but how shall I plead with thee, and what arguments shall I use to prevail that I may obtain them? I know, and I have confessed, that I deserve nothing at thy hands; but dost thou not delight to discover thy free and rich grace, and to make thy mercy triumph over the unworthiness of thy creatures? Hast thou not promised to hear the cries of the humble? And does not thy word assure me, that "those who seek thee early shall find thee?" Are not young petitioners always welcome to thy throne? Has not Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, pleased thee in all things, and purchased by his death all the blessings that I can stand in need of? Let the prayers of a worthless creature come up before thee this morning, with acceptance, on the account of thy Son, who is our great High-priest, and intercedes for us in heaven at thy right hand.

Thanksgiving. In his name also, would I offer up my humble thanks for all the mercies I enjoy, and for all that I hope for. It is to thee, O God, that I owe my very life and being, my health and ease, and the use of my senses and my limbs: Thou givest me safety in the night, and the blessings of the morning. It is from thee I derive all the benefits of food and raiment, the daily supports of nature, together with the rich

promises of grace and eternal salvation. To thee, therefore, O Lord, I pay all honour and praise.

Blessing or doxology. And may the name of God my Father, my Saviour and my Sanctifier, be glorified to everlasting ages. *Amen.*

AN EVENING PRAYER FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

Invocation. Great and glorious Majesty, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast encouraged us on his account, to call thee our God and our Father, look down from heaven, the habitation of thy holiness, and take notice of a poor unworthy creature, who is come to bow down and worship this evening at thy footstool.

Adoration. Thou art God, and there is none else; the heavens and the earth were created by thy word: All things are ever within thy view, nor can the shadows of the night hide me from thine eye: Thou knowest all the works of my hands, and the secret thoughts of my heart.

Confession. How shall a guilty rebel lift up his face toward thy throne? If I had only the sins of this day to account for, I must stand condemned in thy sight: For my heart has too often forgot God; nor has my zeal and diligence in duty been answerable to the obligations thou hast laid upon me. The best of my services are too imperfect to deserve thy love, nor can all my obedience merit the pardon of one of my past transgressions.

Petitions for one's self. 1. But I lie at the door of thy mercy, O my God: I come to beg the forgiveness of all my innumerable offences, for the sake of that blessed atonement which the Lord Jesus has made by the sacrifice of himself. Let my crimes be washed away in his precious blood, and let a worthless sinner be accepted in thy beloved Son.

2. Spare me, O most gracious God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. Cut me not off in the flower of my youth, though my sins have deserved it. Let me not go down to the grave in an unpardoned and unholy state, lest I be for ever miserable: Lengthen out my days to do more service for God and man, and to secure my best interest and my eternal hope. Spare my life, till thy grace has made me fitter for the hour of death.

3. Look into my heart, O Lord; but, alas! what a world of corruption and vanity wilt thou find there. O take out thence every evil thought, and subdue every sinful inclination. Mortify all the vicious principles which thou seest in me. Let thy blessed Spirit renew my soul, sanctify all the powers of my nature, and make me holy as God is holy. Strengthen my pious resolutions under all the frailties of youth, and against the assaults of temptation; for though I would willingly avoid every thing that displeases thee, yet I know my own weakness, and therefore I humbly put myself under the constant protection of thy grace. Preserve my younger years from the pollutions of the world, and guard me through all this dangerous stage of life. Let me not repeat any of the follies or sins that have this day overtaken me, but help me to set a more careful and perpetual watch over my thoughts, my lips, and my actions, that I may not so offend my God, and make continual work for bitter repentance.

4. Choose thou, O Lord, my inheritance for me, and my portion in this world, and be thou my portion and my happiness in the world to come. Let not my heart be set

on grandeur and riches, but fix my affections on the things that are above, where Jesus Christ is at thy right hand. Let me be truly content with the disposals of thy providence in this present life, waiting for joy and complete felicity in the next.

5. And O, my heavenly Father, if thou see it necessary to smite me with the rod of affliction in this state of trial, make me patient and submissive under all the sorrows I sustain; let me receive with holy meekness the correcting strokes of thy hand, since I have so often and so highly provoked thee. Bear me up under all the heavy burdens that may be laid upon me, and carry me safely through the sorest trials and difficulties that may attend my way. Let me never be discouraged in my duty, nor grow weary of well-doing, trusting to thy gracious promise, that I shall reap a joyful harvest in due time, if I faint not.

6. Search me and try me, O Lord, this evening, and discover to me wherein I have wandered from thee: Make me truly penitent for all my wanderings, and reduce my feet to the paths of holiness and peace. Thus, by judging myself at the end of every day, let me be better prepared for my solemn appearance before thy awful seat of judgment: And by the constant practice of piety here on earth, let me grow daily more meet to perform the business of heaven, and to enjoy the blessedness of thy kingdom.

Resignation or self-surrender. And now, O my God, what shall I do to become more entirely thine? I would make a fresh surrender of myself, both soul and body, to thee, for time and eternity. I would lay myself down to rest this night under the shadow of thy wings, under the protection of thy providence, and the guard of thy grace. Let thy holy angels have charge over me while I sleep, and suffer no evil imaginations to molest or disquiet me. Whether I wake or sleep, live or die, let me be the Lord's for ever.

Petitions for others. O thou Almighty Maker of mankind, thou Father of the spirits of all flesh, look down and pity a lost miserable world. Send thy gospel of light and love among the heathen nations: Restore thy ancient people the Jews to thy favour, by the faith of Jesus whom their fathers crucified: Enlighten and recover those parts of the earth which lie under the delusions of Mahomet: Destroy the kingdom of antichrist, which has spread itself so wide among the countries of Europe: Put an everlasting end to popish idolatry, superstition, and tyranny over the consciences of men. Relieve those who suffer for the sake of truth in all quarters of the world: Wheresoever the glorious gospel of Christ is preached, let it be made very successful for the salvation of souls: And cause pure and undefiled religion to flourish among all those who profess it, through the more abundant influences of thy Holy Spirit.

2. Continue to endow our most gracious sovereign King George, with all those human and divine qualities, which are necessary for such a governor, as stands at the head of the protestant interest in the world. Give him length of life, and his people's universal love. Let wise and faithful counsellors ever stand before him; and by the aids of thy grace, let him ever pursue the things that make for his own happiness, for the welfare of the nation, and the peace of thy churches.

3. Bless the royal household of princes and princesses; may they be trained up in the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, that in their growing years they may become blessings to the world; and let virtue and religion be defended and encouraged by all that are exalted to stations of honour and authority in the land.

4. Bestow thy choicest favours on my dear parents, &c. and on all that are related to

me in the bonds of nature; let them be made partakers of thy heavenly and everlasting grace. Bless my superiors of every kind, my teachers and my governors; and may I behave myself in my station of life as becomes a christian, toward all those whom thy providence has set over me.

Thanksgiving. After the many requests I have offered for the mercies I want, I beg leave to render humble thanks to thy Majesty for the blessings I have received. I praise my God for the measures of ease and health which I enjoy, for the kind providences which have attended me this day, and that so many of the comforts of life have been continually provided for me, that I have not been exposed to those hardships and temptations, which have surrounded others in their younger years. Above all, I bless thee, O Lord, for the wonders of thy grace, in providing such a divine and glorious method of recovery for sinful mankind: Blessed be our God, who has ordained of old a covenant of mercy and forgiveness for guilty creatures, and has sent his Son Jesus to be the chief messenger of this covenant, to confirm the promises of it, and to purchase the blessings of it, with his own most precious blood. I praise thee for the full and rich discovery of all this grace to mankind in the holy scriptures, and I desire for ever to praise thee, that while millions of young creatures are bred up in ignorance and gross darkness, I was born and brought up under the sound of thy gospel; and that I have been led into an early acquaintance with thy holy word, wherein lies all my hope of eternal happiness.

Pleading in the name of Christ. Accept, I entreat thee, all these petitions and thank-offerings in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, and my only Mediator. Though I would humbly hope my heart is sincere before thee, and answers to the words of my lips, in these my addresses to the God of heaven, yet it is only by the hand of my great High-Priest above, that I dare offer this evening sacrifice of prayer and praise.

Doxology or blessing. To God only wise and Almighty, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. *Amen.*

Or, we may here use this doxology: Now to him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath brought us near to God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Or if the usual doxology be more pleasing: To him with God the Father and his eternal Spirit, be honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG PERSON'S PRAYER FOR LORD'S-DAY MORNING, TO BE USED TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER MORNING PRAYER.

Eternal and most glorious God, who dwellest in light which no man can approach, who livest and reignest for ever and ever; I thank thee for that comfortable succession of nights and days, which thou hast given me the week past: And though I have sinfully abused too many seasons of mercy, and wasted too many days of grace, yet thou hast brought me, again, to see the light of another day of the son of man. Help me, O Lord, this day to commemorate the rising of my blessed Redeemer from the grave, and let my heart be raised to the heavenly world, and to Jesus, who sits there at thy right hand in power and glory. Banish from my soul every vain thought this morning, that I may begin the day with God. May thy blessed Spirit visit me with his divine

influences, and abide with me in all the public and private duties of religion; for without his gracious assistance I can do nothing that shall be acceptable to thee, or effectual to my own salvation.

I adore the mercy of our God, that he has not left the fallen and sinful race of mankind to perish without hope. Blessed be thy name, O my heavenly Father, who has sent down thy well-beloved Son, to publish thy grace to a guilty world, and to redeem thy people from hell and eternal death. Blessed be Jesus the only begotten Son of God, who condescended to take our flesh and blood upon him, and by his own death to become a reconciler of sinful creatures to thy offended Majesty. I adore and praise thee, O most gracious God, that thou hast conveyed down these glad tidings, through so many hundred years, to the age and to the nation wherein I live. The book of mercy and salvation is put into my hands, and I have been taught to read the covenant of thy grace there. I offer my humble thanks to my exalted Saviour, that he has sent his ministers to explain his word, and to preach to us the things that belong to our eternal peace.

O may I attend, with cheerfulness and holy desire, upon the ordinances of thy house this day! and may I find thy presence in the assemblies of thy people, for thou lovest the gates of Zion, and thy church is thy holy temple, where thou art wont to display thy power and glory. While thy word is read or preached, let my soul be engaged in deep attention and reverence: Let thy ministers be taught of God, and happily unfold the great and important things of thy law and gospel to men. Let them preach the truth as it is in Jesus, and speak with power to the consciences of the hearers, particularly to my conscience, O my God! May I find something in thy holy institutions this day, suited to the state and temper of my soul, that I may learn more of the knowledge of God, may gain victory over some sin, and make some happy advances in serious religion.

I entreat thee, O Lord, suffer me not any longer to be a drowsy, an idle, or a forgetful hearer of thy word: May my soul be lifted up to thee with due fervency in the prayers that shall be offered to thy Majesty, and may my lips sing thy praises with holy joy. Let no vain amusements call my eyes and my heart away from lively devotion, and the divine pleasures of thy sanctuary. May this world, with all the cares and the trifles of it, be forgotten and vanish from my thoughts, nor intrude into my solemn hours, or interrupt my humble converse with thee. Let me come away from thy house, under the light of thy countenance, satisfied with thy love, and longing for the returns of such holy seasons.

In the name of Jesus, and by his hands, I desire to offer up this morning sacrifice; and I would entreat and hope for acceptance at thy mercy-seat, O God, in the virtue of his bloody death, and his everlasting intercession. In the evening, let my heart be filled with holy thankfulness, and have rich occasion for it through the plentiful communications of thy grace. And may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make me perfect in every good work to do his will, working in me that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG PERSON'S PRAYER FOR LORD'S-DAY EVENING, TO BE USED TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER EVENING PRAYER.

Ever blessed God, the Father of glory and the God of all grace, this day hast thou invited me to attend on the worship of thy house, and hast opened to me some of the treasures of thy sanctuary; thou hast caused me to hear the words of eternal life, and called me to join with thy people, in the voice of prayer and praise: But how poor and imperfect are my best services? How unworthy of thy acceptance, O my God, who art surrounded with ten thousands of worshipping angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect.

I desire to bow my knees, and confess before thee with shame and sorrow, how heavy and dull my heart has been, amidst the quickening ordinances of thy house: How often have my thoughts stole away from thy presence, and wandered afar off among the cares, the businesses, or the vanities of this life? In how cold and formal a manner have too many of my devotions, this day, been offered up to thy holy Majesty, and how little of thy word has been treasured up in my heart?

O most merciful God, forgive the iniquity of my holy things, and lay not the sin to my charge. I humbly trust in the blood of Jesus thy Son, and his perfect righteousness, to answer for all my imperfections. Though the day be almost ended, let not the work of it be all lost. Let thy good Spirit bring to my remembrance, some of the sacred instructions, which I have heard in thy house; and so far as thy ministers have spoken agreeably to thy mind and will, let my soul retain the sense and savour of it, for many days to come. Let not all the good seed be sown in vain, but do thou cause some part of it to spring up, and bring forth the blessed fruits of righteousness, in my following conversation. O may I love God and man better, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, my Saviour and my hope. May I hate sin more daily, and find myself more weaned from this flesh and this world, which have been such unhappy clogs and hinderances in my attempts to honour God.

And yet, O Lord, I would bless thy name also, that I hope there have been in me some sincere breathings of soul toward thee: I humbly hope, that I have found through thy grace some holy exercises of faith, submission, and obedience, while I heard or read thy word, and some relish of sacred pleasure in thy worship, and that both in my solemn retirements, and in the congregations of thy people. Blessed be God, who has not utterly forsaken his own ordinances, nor forgotten his unworthy servant. Accept, I pray thee, all my sincere endeavours to love and serve thee, in the name of Jesus, my only Mediator. Carry on thy own good work in me: Let every spark of thy heavenly grace be cherished and improved, till it grow up hereafter to joy and glory.

I adore and praise thy name, O God, that we have peace and liberty given us by our rulers, that they are become the guardians of our religious and civil privileges, and that we can wait on thee in public assemblies, and none can make us afraid. Pity thy poor scattered people, under the dominion of popish and idolatrous princes, thy distressed children, who can only groan and sigh unto thee in secret, and are forbid the pleasures of thy sanctuary.

Heal the wretched quarrels, and scandalous divisions, that are found among the christian churches. Teach them the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure,

and then peaceable, and, which abounds in the fruits of mercy and love. Reform them all, blessed Saviour, and remove from among them, whatsoever is contrary to the nature and design of thy holy religion.

O that such sacred advantages and seasons of grace, as I have this day enjoyed, may train up my soul, under the aids of thy Spirit, to a preparation for the blessed assembly of saints and angels above! with them I desire humbly to join my songs and my praises. Salvation, honour, and glory be ascribed to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG PERSON'S GRACE BEFORE MEAT, WHEN ALONE.

Almighty God, the Maker and the Lord of all things, thou openest the stores of thy bounty, and providest my daily food: May the blessing attend it, that I may be nourished to do thee service and honour; and may I enjoy thy special love amidst the common blessings of thy providence, for the sake of Jesus my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG PERSON'S GRACE AFTER MEAT, WHEN ALONE.

I acknowledge thy great goodness, O Lord, in feeding me with food convenient for me, in giving me the means of grace, and the hopes of glory: Let me walk before thee in thy fear and love, answerable to thy present mercies and my eternal hopes, for Christ's sake *Amen.*

THE YOUNG PERSON'S GRACE BEFORE MEAT, IN COMPANY.

Most merciful God and Father, though we are utterly unworthy of the least of thy favours, yet thy bounty is still furnishing us with the daily supports of life: Let us always eat and drink, with moderation and temperance; and let us be trained up by the blessings of thy providence, and the assistances of thy grace, till we are made fit for thy glory, for the sake of Jesus our only Mediator. *Amen.*

THE YOUNG PERSON'S GRACE AFTER MEAT, IN COMPANY.

What sufficient thanks can we render to thee, O Lord, for the daily benefits of this life, and for the promises and hopes of a better life to come? Let us never abuse our present mercies, but shew our sincere thankfulness, by improving them to thy honour, and our own eternal comfort, through the intercession of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A SHORTER GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

Bless us, O Lord, and bless the provisions of the table to our use, that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, all may turn to thy glory, and our good, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A SHORTER GRACE AFTER MEAT.

Let God be praised, for all our supports and enjoyments on earth, and for all our hopes of heaven, through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

Though the foregoing prayers composed for youth and young persons, in the morning or evening, are cast into a plain and easy method, so as to include the chief parts of prayer in a natural order, for the information of learners, yet, as I intimated in the preface, so I would repeat it here, that prayers are not always to be framed in the same method, and indeed it is seldom, that such an exact order should be observed. There is too much confinement and restraint laid upon the freedom, the fervency and the spirit of devotion, by too strict an observance of such a rule. It is better generally to intermix these distinct parts of prayer, as in the following examples:

Adoration and thanksgiving. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy holy name be honour and praise: Thou art great in power, beyond all our thoughts, and thou hast done great things for us, above all our praises. Thy heart is full of compassion and love, and we bless thee, that thou hast shewn thy love and compassion to us, in raising us from our lost estate, and leading us into the way of salvation.

Adoration and confession. Thou art a great God, and glorious in thy holiness, but we are guilty and unholy creatures; how shall we lift up our faces to thee, or appear in thy presence?

Adoration and petition. Thy mercies, O Lord, are exceeding great, pity us in our sinful state, and raise us from our guilt and wretchedness.

Or thus: There is rich grace and forgiveness with thee, and plenteous redemption with thy Son Jesus; O let our iniquities be all forgiven, and let us be partakers of that rich grace, through the death and intercession of our blessed Redeemer.

Confession and thanksgiving. How are our souls covered with guilt, and our natures defiled with sin? How unworthy are we to come before a holy God? But blessed be that grace, that has provided a way, both for our pardon and our purification. Blessed be our God, who has opened the fountain of the blood of Christ his Son, to wash away our defilements, and has appointed his own Spirit to renew our natures in holiness.

Confession and petition. Ah Lord, how wretched is our state by nature? How ignorant are our minds? How full are our hearts of iniquity and folly? and how sinful have our lives been in thy sight? What shall we say unto thee, O thou observer of men? We lie at thy foot and cry for mercy. Save us from the miseries we have deserved, blot out our transgressions for ever, and take us under the care and power of thy grace, and the teachings of thy Spirit, that we may be made wise and holy.

*Petition and pleading**. Teach us thy ways, O Lord, and let us grow, in all useful knowledge: Hast thou not promised, to give wisdom to them that ask it of thee, and to teach thy ways to the humble?

Or thus: Save us from the power of every temptation, for we are weak in ourselves, and cannot stand, without the aids of thy grace. Keep our hearts by thy power, for our own care and watchfulness are not sufficient for our safety, if God forsake us. If thou leave us, O Lord, we perish.

Or thus: Bestow all needful blessings on us, O Lord, for time and eternity: Has not thy Son purchased them, with his own blood? And have we not encouragement to hope for them, when we ask in his name?

Or thus: We are weak and worthless creatures, yet deliver, and save us, for thy name's sake: Thy power and grace will shine the more gloriously in our salvation: Hast thou not saved many a sinner, as worthless and as weak as we are?

* These two parts of prayer, are most frequently intermingled,

Petition and thanksgiving. Lord, while we bless thee, from our souls, for the many and undeserved instances of thy mercy, which we have received; we present our humble petitions for new favours and blessings. We praise thee, O God, that thou hast bestowed on us the comforts of this life; bestow on us also the graces of thy Spirit and the blessings of the life to come.

In this manner, may young christians learn to vary their methods of prayer, and to suit their adorations, confessions, petitions, pleadings and thanksgivings to all particular cases in their daily devotions, or on special occasions: Of which last I have given many intances, in the following composures.

EXAMPLES OF PRAYER ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

I. BEFORE READING THE SCRIPTURES.

CALL my thoughts away, O Lord, from the things of this world, and compose them to attend to thy holy word. I praise thy name, that thou hast put into my hand, this best of books, which was written to make us wise to salvation; yet I entreat thee, O God, leave me not to read it, without the instructions of thy Holy Spirit. Teach a child to understand thy word, so far as is needful for me, and help me to draw such useful meditations from it, as may make a pious impression on my Spirit, and may render me wiser and better for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

II. ON GOING TO SCHOOL.

BLESSED God, thou hast appointed us, in our younger years to be under tutors and governors: Incline me, I pray thee to submit willingly to their instructions and reproofs, and make me grow daily in some profitable knowledge of the things of God and man. Bless my teachers, and all their labours in my education: But be thou my chief teacher, and train me up to some usefulness in this world, and to eternal life in the world to come, for the sake of Christ thy beloved Son. *Amen.*

III. UPON LEAVING A FATHER'S HOUSE.

SINCE I am called to leave the house of my earthly parents, and they cannot see me, and take care of me, daily, as they used to do, Lord, I desire more particularly, to put myself under the care of thee, my heavenly Father: Whatsoever I want, let me run to thee, and find thee my helper, and my almighty friend, for the sake of my dear and blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

IV. UPON ENTERING INTO ANY SORT OF LEARNING, WHETHER READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, OR WORK OF ANY KIND.

O God of wisdom and grace, bless all my diligent endeavours to gain knowledge. Give me such a degree of understanding and skill in those things which I take in hand, as may fit me for that state of life in which thy good providence shall place me: Suffer me not to trifle away my time; but let me treasure up that learning in my youth, which may be a support or a comfort to me, in my riper years. And I beg, for the sake of Jesus Christ, that none of my other studies or labours, may tempt me to neglect the knowledge or practice of religion, or turn my heart aside from God or the things of heaven. *Amen.*

V. ON A SENSIBLE IMPROVEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.—IN RELIGION.

How happy is it for me, O Lord God, that I have been taught betimes, to know thee, the Maker of all things, and thy Son Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners! I give thanks to thee, for my teachers, and for all their instructions, and for thy blessing upon them. Make me cheerful in the performance of every duty as soon as I know it: And let me never sin against my knowledge, but improve all that I know, to thy glory and my everlasting benefit, for the sake of Jesus my mediator. *Amen.*

VI. IN READING.

I give thanks to thy mercy O Lord, that I have been taught to read, so that I can make use of thy holy word, in order to learn the way to salvation, and eternal life thereby. Blessed be thy name, that I was not bred up in utter ignorance as too many children have been, to their great disadvantage, in this world, and the danger of their souls, in the world to come. O suffer me not to abuse this part of knowledge, and to waste my time in reading vain and idle stories, or foolish and wicked jests, but let me delight to read thy word, and books of useful knowledge, virtue and piety, that may turn to good account hereafter, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

VII. IN WRITING.

I acknowledge thy goodness, O Lord, that I have learned to handle the pen of the writer: Let it be a pleasure to me to set down what I remember of thy word, when thy ministers preach to us the gospel of Christ. And do thou instruct me, how to write down my sins and thy mercies, that I may not forget what thou hast done for me, and what I have done against thee.

Suffer me not to abuse my pen, and defile it, by writing what is profane, wanton or wicked: But let this skill, which thou hast given me, be sanctified, that it may turn to thy glory, and my good, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

VIII. IN ARITHMETIC.

O God, whose knowledge is infinite, and whose mercies are innumerable, if thou givest me any skill in the art of numbers, let me use it with care and exactness, with faithfulness and honesty; and let me never commit such mistakes, as to do injury to myself or others. Above all, "teach me, for Christ's sake, so to number my days, and to consider how short my time is, that I may apply my heart to true wisdom," and prepare for that eternal state, whose years cannot be numbered. *Amen.*

IX. IN SINGING.

Since thou givest me opportunity, O Lord, to learn this delightful art of singing, let no wicked songs ever pollute my lips; let my memory be furnished with "psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, that I may make melody to thee, with grace in my heart," and at the same time refresh my own spirits: And while I glorify my God, with my tongue on earth, let me grow daily, fitter to sing the songs of Paradise. "Salvation honour and glory to God the Father, who sits upon the throne, and to Jesus the Lamb of God, for ever and ever." *Amen.*

X. IN ANY WORK.

Great God, who art, "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," thy word has told us, that thou teachest the husbandman to open and to break the ground with his plough, to sow his seed, and to gather and thresh out his corn. I praise thee, who givest me also knowledge and capacity to perform any useful business, in this life. May my hands be never engaged in the service of sin or Satan, nor let me delight in sloth and idleness, lest I be exposed to the temptations of the devil. Shew me how I may be always employed in something serviceable to God or myself, or my fellow creatures; and may all my labours be attended with thy blessing for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

XI. ON TAKING ANY RECREATION.

Gracious God, thou knowest how frail our natures are, and that sometimes we need to have our spirits and our limbs refreshed, in this manner, in our childish state: Guard me, O Lord, from sin amidst my sports, and let me set a watch over my words and actions, that I may not offend thee, or hurt any of my fellows, nor waste too much of my time in sporting. May this, and every recreation, tend to the health of my body, and render me, afterward, fitter for every duty for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

XII. ON SENSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN STATURE.

I praise thee, O heavenly Father, that I enjoy such a measure of health, and that thou makest me grow toward the state of a man, (or woman) in this world. Suffer me not to continue still a child in understanding, nor let my soul decay in the things of

religion, while my body increases in stature. But, through the aids of thy grace, let me do as my blessed Saviour did, while he was a child here on earth; let me grow in stature, and wisdom, and in favour with God and man: Now he dwells in heaven, above men and angels: To him be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XIII. UPON LEAVING OFF OLD GARMENTS AND PUTTING ON NEW.

As I now put off my old garments, because I have worn them long enough, so help me, O Lord, to put off my follies and sins, because I have lived in them too long already. And as new raiment is perpared for my body, so let my soul be renewed after thy image, and let me be clothed with righteousness and true holiness. Let me remember also, that I must ere long put off this body, like an old garment, and leave it in the grave: O may my soul be prepared then to put on the robes of glory, that thou hast prepared for them that love thee, that I may dwell with thee, in thy kingdom, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

XIV. ANOTHER ON THE SAME OCCASION.

I THANK thee, O Lord, who providest for me change of raiment: Though I am drest in new apparel, suffer me not to be proud of it; nor let me think better of myself because I am finer than I was, or because my clothes make a better shew than some of my fellows: Teach me, O Lord, that knowledge and goodness are the best adorning, and let me seek to excel others in these things, that I may be more lovely and pleasing in thy sight, for the sake of my blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

XV. ON GOING A JOURNEY.

PRESERVE me, O Lord, in all my ways, and wheresoever I go, guard me with thy hand, that no evil may befal me. All places are under thy eye, and I desire every where, to remember that God sees me. Make my present journey pleasant and comfortable, and let me consider, that I am always travelling, through this world towards death and eternity; and when the journey of my life is ended, let me arrive at the gates of heaven, and be admitted there for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

XVI. AFTER A SAFE JOURNEY.

PRAISE is due to thee, O my God, my guide and my preserver. Thou hast made my travels easy and safe; thou hast sent thy holy angels to guard me, in all my ways, and thy kind providence has watched over me, to defend me from mischief. Thou hast kept all my bones, not one of them is broken. Thou art the God of my life, my safety and my comfort; to thy name be everlasting honour. *Amen.*

XVII. ENQUIRING AFTER A TRADE OR PROFESSION.

LORD, since thou hast appointed every one to be engaged in some business, in this world, direct my friends to choose a proper employment for me. Does not thy word

inform me, that several of thy apostles were fishermen, that Paul was a maker of tents, and even thy holy child Jesus, was called a carpenter? I would also be employed in some honest labour or business. Let my heart be inclined to that calling, which may be most for my benefit in this world, and may at the same time, be no hinderance to me in the things of religion, and in my way to heaven. Thou knowest, O Lord, it is a matter of great importance; help me to consider that it is a choice for the whole course of my life; counsel me by thy wisdom, and let thy providence determine every thing for thy honour and my advantage, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy son. *Amen.*

XVIII. FOR A CHILD OR YOUTH IN APPRENTICESHIP.

LET thy presence be with me, most gracious God, in the station and family where thou hast placed me. Keep me from the many snares and temptations, that attend youth on all sides, in this sinful age. Let me set a daily watch upon all my ways, that I may not offend thy Majesty. Make me first faithful to God, and then to my master, even when I am not in his sight: Let me so fill up every part of my time and manage the concerns intrusted with me, in such a manner that I may not be afraid to be called to account. And grant, O Lord, that I may be so well acquainted with the proper business of my calling, and find such favour in the sight of men, that I may hereafter, become more useful in the world, and glorify thee in my following course of life, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

XIX. FOR A CHILD OR YOUTH AT SEA.

GLORIOUS and Almighty God, who hast appointed me by thy providence "to go down to the sea in a ship, and to do business in the great waters, help me to take notice of the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." When I view the heavens which thou hast made, and observe the sun and the stars, whereby our course of sailing is directed, let me adore thy greatness, who causest the sun to fulfil his daily circuit, who "numberest all the stars, and callest them by their names." Blessed Saviour, who didst often travel by sea, when thou camest down to visit us here on earth, I would commit myself to thy care amidst all the winds and the waves, for thou canst say to them all, "Peace, be still, and the stormy wind shall obey thy word." Keep me from all those temptations, and those wicked ways, which I may be in danger of, in this sort of life: And in whatsoever part of the world I am, let me not venture upon any sinful practice, but always remember that a holy God hath his eye upon me, and his hand will find me out. Bring me safe to the port to which I am sailing at this time: And whensoever thou shalt see fit to call my soul away, whether it be by sea or land, let it be taken up to dwell in heaven with God, and with my blessed Redeemer, to whose name be all honour and praise for ever. *Amen.*

XX. FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE RICH.

I ADORE and bless thy good providence, O Lord, who hast brought me forth, in the midst of plenty, and given me friends, who provide for me such a variety of comforts in this life: Grant that I may not forget God, the giver of all good things. Though thou

feedest me with the finest of the wheat, and arrayest me in richer apparel than others, yet let me remember, that I am made of the same flesh and blood, as the poorest child on earth, and that I have the same sinful nature, which belongs to all the children of Adam: Suffer me not therefore to be proud and high-minded, to exalt myself above others, or look down upon them with a scornful eye, nor let my lips scoff at them; but teach me to pity the poor, and to relieve them according to my ability with prudence and discretion. Make me careful to grow rich in good works, and to encrease more in knowledge and in every virtue, since I have greater advantages than others: Let me "not trust in uncertain riches which do, as it were, take wings and fly away;" but let me endeavour to secure those heavenly treasures which will abide for ever, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

XXI. FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR.

Most high God, who art the wise ruler and disposer of all thy creatures, I desire humbly to submit to thy providence, who hast seen fit to place me and my father's house, in a low estate, in this world: Help me to remember that Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, was willing to be born and brought up in a poor and mean condition: and let me not be impatient of that state which our Saviour himself endured, "who, though he was rich, yet made himself poor for our sakes." Save me, I pray thee, from the temptations which attend poverty: Let me not envy the rich, nor grow uneasy, because I see other children better fed and better clothed than I am. I would bless thee, from my heart, for that thou providest any food and raiment for me, to keep me from hunger and cold. Suffer me not to covet what belongs to others, and much less to put forth my hands to the money, or goods, of my neighbour, to steal or pilfer from him. Make me content under my circumstances, and diligent in my daily learning or work: nor let me ever want what is necessary to support my life. The less I have here on earth, make me the more careful to seek after a treasure in heaven, and bring me safely in thy time to the possession of it, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

XXII. FOR CHILDREN IN MIDDLE CIRCUMSTANCES.

What abundant reason have I, O Lord, to honour thy wisdom, and the goodness of thy providence, that thou hast placed me and my father's house in the middle circumstances of this life; that I am not possessed of so great riches, as might make me grow high-minded and forget God; and that I am not so poor, as to lie under any temptation to steal, in order to provide me food or raiment. While I behold other children richer than I, let this make me humble: While I see others poorer than I, let this make me thankful: Enable me, O Lord, to mind the daily business and labour of life, to which thou callest me, and to do good to others as far as I am capable. Carry me safe, through all the dangers of this world, till I am prepared for a better state, in the world to come, for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

XXIII. FOR A CHILD OR YOUTH AT SERVICE.

It is thy good pleasure, O Lord, that I should become a servant to others in this

world; but let me always remember, that my first and chief business is to serve and please thee. Make me diligent and faithful in the work that is appointed me, even when my master and mistress are absent; and let me neither do them wrong, nor consent to it, nor conceal any wrong that is done to them. May I behave myself in so humble, so wise and so becoming a manner toward all, that I may gain the love and esteem of all that know me, and be at last approved of thee my Maker and my Judge, and be accepted unto eternal life, for the sake of Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

XXIV. A PRAYER AGAINST NATURAL FEARS.

Blessed God, who art the guard and defence of those that love thee, deliver me from this weakness of nature, this vain and foolish fear, which so often disquiets me. Do I not read in thy word, that "the righteous is bold as a lion?" And I hope I am willing to be made righteous, and to do the will of God: why then should I be afraid? Hast thou not invited those that are fearful to put their confidence in thee? Help me to fear thee, and to trust in thee, and then I need not fear, what any creature can do against me. Wheresoever I am, let me believe that God is with me, and let me not be afraid of all the powers of darkness, nor of death itself, since Jesus Christ my Saviour has subdued them all: To whom be glory and praise everlasting. *Amen.*

XXV. AGAINST FROWARDNESS, OBSTINACY, AND OTHER VICES OF CHILDREN.

O God, who art the fountain of all wisdom and goodness, thou hast made me a reasonable creature, and though I am but a child, I pray, that reason may direct all my actions. Let not foolish humours and idle fancies rule and govern me, but let all my desires, and all my passions be subject to reason. Grant that I may never be uneasy or fretful at the happiness of others, nor rejoice in any mischief that befals them. Suffer me not to be froward or peevish, quarrelsome or spiteful among my fellows: Make me meek and humble, and let me rather yield in many things, than contend by angry words or blows: If I am injured, let me not revenge myself, but make my complaint to those who are set over me. Nor let me ever be obstinate and sullen to my parents and governors, but always hearken to advice, and obey those who are wiser than I. May I grow in wisdom and goodness, as I grow in years; may I ever act as becomes a creature of reason, a child of God, and a follower of Jesus Christ, his best-beloved Son, whom I desire to love, and honour, and imitate, here on earth, and be made like him for ever in heaven. *Amen.*

XXVI. AFTER SOME PARTICULAR AND GRIEVOUS SIN.

O Lord Jesus my Saviour, whither should I go but to thee, who camest down from heaven to seek and save lost sinners? I have broken the law of God, and have sinned grievously against my conscience: But I desire to be ashamed before thee, and to have my heart broken under a sense of my folly. O that I might be reconciled to God by the virtue of thy bloody death and thy prevailing intercession! Accept, O Lord God, a re-

penting sinner; forgive all my offences, and particularly this new transgression, and make me very watchful for time to come. Keep me by thy grace from repeating my trespasses, and preserve me to thy heavenly kingdom for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

XXVII. AFTER SOME SERIOUS IMPRESSIONS IN A SERMON.

I BLESS thy name, O Lord, who hast made thy word reach my heart. How many sermons have I heard carelessly and forgot them entirely? O let me not forget, what I have heard this day, but let thy Holy Spirit refresh my memory, and keep the thoughts of it lively upon my spirit*. Let me love thee more than ever; let me hate sin more than ever: Let thy work of grace be carried on upon my soul, till I am become a new creature, a sincere christian; and let every sermon, that I shall hear for time to come, help forward this blessed work of my salvation, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

Observe here, that in the following examples of prayer, relating to the events that occur in a family, I have been constrained to use expressions which are very general, that I might include a variety of cases. It would be endless and impossible to enter into particulars. The child may be taught to add or alter a few words, and to express himself more particularly suiting the occasion.

XXVIII. AT THE BIRTH OF A BROTHER OR SISTER, OR ANY NEW RELATION COMING INTO A FAMILY.

O LORD God our Creator, who makest families increase like a flock, since thy providence has given me a new relation, let him [her] become a blessing to our family. Help me to love him [her] as I ought, and so to carry it toward him [her] that I may fulfil my proper duty: And let me be always accepted of thee through Jesus Christ, who loved us, and was once born into this world a young child, that he might be related to us and save us. May his name be praised for evermore. *Amen.*

XXIX. ON ANY CALAMITY IN A FAMILY.

GLORIOUS God, thou art the all-wise Governor of this world, and seest it needful to afflict us at this season: Thou hast suffered a heavy calamity to fall upon my father [mother, brother, sister, &c.] and we are all concerned in the general sorrow. I pray thee, teach us all to take due notice of thy hand, and to lie humble before thee: Let sin grow more hateful to us, which is the common cause of affliction. Sanctify our present distress, that our hearts may be made better by it: Forgive the sins, that have provoked thy majesty, and remove our sorrows. Let me gain some good to my soul, in my younger years, by such sore and painful troubles: And by all thy methods of providence and grace let me be trained up to thy heavenly glory, for our Redeemer's sake. *Amen.*

XXX. ON SICKNESS IN A FAMILY.

GREAT and everlasting God, we are feeble dying creatures; our health, our strength,

* Here the child should mention some particulars, of the sermon, in prayer, which were most affecting.

and all our comforts, depend entirely on thee: When thou sendest sickness, no medicines can remove it, without thy blessing: I entreat thee, therefore, bless the medicines that are used, for the recovery of my dear father, [mother, brother, sister, &c.] from this distemper. Let not this sickness be unto death, but let him, [her] live some years longer, to do thee service in the world. May our blessed Redeemer, who healed so many sick persons, when he was here on earth, command the disease to depart and it shall depart, for his word his almighty; and let the whole family rejoice in thy goodness, and give thee all honour and praise. *Amen.*

XXXI. ON THE RECOVERY OF THOSE THAT ARE SICK.

All glory be given to thy name, O Lord, who art the great and powerful Physician. Thou didst hearken to the requests of our family, and heal my dear father, [mother, brother, sister, &c.] when he, [she] was smitten with sickness, and brought very low. Let me ever remember, that thou art a God hearing prayer, and trust in thee at all times. Let me call upon thee in a day of distress, and let all our lips be filled with thy praises. *Amen.*

XXXII. ON DEATH IN A FAMILY.

Most high and most holy God, who livest for ever, thou hast seen fit to send death into the midst of us, and hast taken away my dear father, [mother, brother, sister, &c.] out of the land of the living.

As it is a very awful stroke, so let it be made profitable to us, and effectually teach us some lessons of holiness. May each of us have our hearts more taken off, from these dying comforts, and let each of us be quickened to prepare for our own death, and our appearance before God. O that I may remember my Creator in the days of my youth, and set about the work of religion with more diligence than ever! May I sincerely repent of my sins, and have a true faith in the Son of God. Give me a good hope of the pardon of sin, and some plain marks of a child of God upon me, that I may meet death without fear, and be ready to follow my departed friends whensoever thou callest me: And bring me to dwell with them, in the world of perfect holiness and perfect happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

XXXIII. THE CHILD'S PRAYER IN HIS OWN SICKNESS.

Look down upon me in mercy, O most gracious God, and pity me under the sickness which thy hand has sent. Consider my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Even the iniquities and follies of my childhood, deserve all the smart and sorrow that I feel, and shouldst thou punish me, according to my sins, my misery would be far greater: But there is pardoning grace with thee, through the merits of thy Son Jesus, and this is all my hope. Support my feeble spirits to bear, what thou layest on me, and comfort my heart with thy word. Remove the distemper and heal me, O Lord, that I may do thee further service. Yet in every sickness, I would be prepared for dying: Though I have been, but a little while in this world, thy grace can fit me, and make me willing, to go out of it. Whether I live or die, let me be thine for ever. *Amen.*

XXXIV. ON HIS RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

How shall I render thee, sufficient thanks and praises, O Lord my God, for thy new mercies? Thou hast eased my pain, thou hast healed my disease, thou hast restored me to some measure of strength: Since life is given me anew, let me not return to my old sins, lest I provoke thee, to punish me more severely. Since thou hast not cut me off by death, but hast given longer time for repentance, let me not trifle that time away, in childish follies, but live to the honour of that God, who has spared me, for the sake of my blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

XXXV. FOR A CHILD WHO HAS LOST FATHER OR MOTHER, OR BOTH.

Thou, O Lord, hast been in all ages, the father of the fatherless, and thy compassions are more tender than the love of a mother: to thee, therefore, I come daily, and desire to put myself, under thy heavenly care, since I have lost one [both] of my earthly parents. Thy mercy can do more for me, than parents can ever do for their most beloved offspring. Let me not be exposed to the wants, the mischiefs and the dangers, that many children have been exposed to, for want of friends to breed them up. Do thou, O Lord, train me up in thy fear and love. Let Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour, take charge of me, and carry me safely through this world, till I am brought to the house of my heavenly Father, where I shall honour and praise him for ever. *Amen.*

XXXVI. THANKS FOR A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

How great is the blessing, thou hast bestowed on me, O Lord God of mercy, that I should be brought forth into this world, in a christian nation, and not among wild heathens, where the word of God is not known! How shall I praise thee enough, that I was born in a protestant country, and not among ignorant and cruel papists, where the people are not suffered to read the Bible in their own langnage! How can I sufficiently admire thy goodness, that I have enjoyed the blessing of religious parents [or friends] who have trained me up in the knowledge of the only true God and his Son Jesus Christ; and from my youngest years, have taught me the ways of truth and holiness, which lead to heaven. What shall I render to the Lord for these peculiar favours.

I praise thee with my lips and with my heart, that I have not been suffered to wander in the streets, among the children who grow up in wickedness; that I have not been bred up in families where the dreadful voice of swearing and cursing is heard; but that my dwelling has been, where the name of God is honoured, and his worship is performed. How shall I answer it, O Lord, if I abuse such advantages, and forsake the ways of God? Grant me thy grace, that I may learn the lessons of holiness and goodness, which are taught me by the instructions, and the example of my parents, [or friends] and lead me in those ways to everlasting life, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who reigns at thy right-hand for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XXXVII. THANKS FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE LIFE OF PARENTS.

My soul desires to praise thee, O most merciful Father, that thou hast not only given me such parents, who have been careful to provide for me what I want, but that thou hast lengthened out their life so long, till they have seen me thus far advanced in my education: I bless thee from my heart, that thou hast not made me a fatherless child,

nor taken away my mother in my infancy; but that I have had so many wise instructions, so many kind reproofs, and so many serious counsels and warnings from them, during all my years of childhood and folly.

While other unhappy children, have been early deprived of their parents, by death, and been exposed to many hardships and dangers, I have enjoyed the long continuance of this invaluable blessing. O Lord, preserve their lives yet longer; forgive all my offences, against them and against thee; bless them with thy choicest favours, and crown their cares and their prayers on my account, with thy grace here, and thy glory hereafter, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

XXXVIII. PRAYER FOR CONVERSION OF THE HEART TO GOD.

Most holy and most merciful God, I desire to lie humble at thy foot, because I was born in sin, and I feel evil inclinations working daily within me; let my sinful heart be changed by thy Holy Spirit, and let holy dispositions be wrought there. Let all my old evil affections and desires be done away, and make me a new creature, that I may lay aside childish follies and vanities, and become truly religious in my younger years. Give me sincere repentance for all my past transgressions, and a hatred of every sin for time to come, that being converted to God betimes, I may begin early to love and honour thee here, and be prepared for thy heavenly kingdom, for the dear sake of thy beloved Son Jesus, in whom is all my trust, and to whom be everlasting honour. *Amen.*

XXXIX. FOR BETTER ABILITY TO PRAY.

Blessed Lord, most high and most holy, who dost not despise the language of children, but delightest to see them coming to bow before thy throne, and to seek thy favour: O may thy Holy Spirit instruct me to pray, and bless all my endeavours to learn and practise this duty. Let me know and adore thy majesty, and thy mercy: Shew me my sins, and help me to confess them: Give me a deep and hearty sense of my wants both for soul and body, and enable me to express them before thee: Assist me to plead with thee for mercies, and to trust in thy love. Raise my heart to thankfulness for all the blessings I receive, and teach me to offer the sacrifice of praise: Let the name of Jesus be my hope, who pleads in heaven, for such poor children as I am, even when they know not how to pray for themselves. I desire to honour and love him, and give him everlasting praises. *Amen.*

OF THE LORD'S-PRAYER.

It is sufficiently evident to me, that the Lord's prayer was given to the diciples, in the beginning of their christianity, partly as a form of prayer for their daily use, and partly as a pattern for their imitation in those early days: But since it contains in it, scarce any of the peculiar revelations of the New Testament, I am persuaded it was never designed, to be a full and sufficient form or pattern after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the more complete revelation of the gospel. Yet because it has been usual to teach it as a prayer for children, I have here paraphrased it according to the further discoveries made by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament.

XL. A PARAPHRASE ON THE LORD'S-PRAYER.

Most merciful *Father, who art in heaven*, and who seest all things that are done on earth, *let thy name be hallowed*, by all thy creatures, and let me ever carry it towards thee as a great and holy God: *May thy kingdom come*, and be set up more universally in this world, by the preaching of thy gospel: May all nations submit themselves to thee and to thy Son Jesus Christ: Let thy Spirit rule in the hearts of men, and *thy will be done among us on earth, as it is among the angels in heaven: Give me this day my daily bread*, and every day of my life bestow on me those things, which are necessary to maintain my health and strength, that I may be more capable of serving thee: *Forgive my trespasses*, which I have committed against thee, for the sake of the death and intercession of thy dear Son, and enable me from the heart *to forgive those who have trespassed against me. Lead me not into temptation*, nor let me run carelessly into danger of sinning, *but deliver me from the evil one*, and from all his devices to defile and destroy my soul: For *the kingdom* and government of all things, belong to thee: Thou hast *power* to do whatsoever I ask: And all honour and *glory* are thy due *for ever and ever*. Amen.

A SERIOUS ADDRESS TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH, RELATING TO THE GREAT AND NECESSARY DUTY OF PRAYER.

DEAR CHILDREN,

GIVE me leave to propose to you a few serious considerations, to awaken your desires to seek after God, and to pray to him in your early years, and if you are convinced that this is your necessary duty, you will then more readily hearken to the advices that follow.

I. "Consider who and what God is."

Have you not been told that he is an Almighty Being, who made the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them? that he is a Spirit, and that he is every where present, though you cannot see him? that he knows all things that you do, and that he can do all that you desire of him? that he is holy, and hates sin, and yet that he is very good and full of mercy, even to his sinful creatures? that he is the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings? and does he not expect you should love and honour him, who is so great and so good? does he not require that you should praise him for his glorious nature, and for his wonderful works, or have you learned to know him in vain? And is he not your heavenly Father who gave you a being? Did he not make you to love and serve, and worship him? And how can you pretend to serve, and love him, if you never pray to him? Could you but see him, children, you would think him the most lovely and most excellent of all beings, and should you not then be exceeding desirous to be more acquainted with him, and seek to obtain his love?

II. "Consider who and what you are."

Are you not young creatures, that a few years ago had no being at all, and you cannot preserve your own lives? And is it not of high concern to you to be acquainted with that God, and to pray to him upon whom your very being depends. He that made you can destroy you. And besides, are you not sinful creatures and have deserved the

anger of God? Do not your own hearts and consciences tell you that you have done many things amiss and that you have provoked that God who made you, to be angry with you, and to take away all your comforts? And are you willing to continue under his anger for ever? Do you know how terrible is the anger of God, who can make you miserable in this world, and in that which is to come? And is he not very gracious, to call upon such sinners as you are, to pray to him? Is it not necessary therefore that you should come humbly before him, and fall down on your knees and confess your sins, and entreat him to lay his anger aside, and to love you notwithstanding all your offences? This leads me to the third consideration.

III. "Consider what are your wants."

Those wants, which you take the first and most common notice of, are such as relate to your bodies and your present life, which are called temporal wants. Do you not stand in daily need of food and raiment, that you may not suffer sharp hunger and cold? Do you not want the continuance of your health and your ease, that you may not pine away with sickness and pain? Can you keep yourselves alive, or can any of your friends here on earth keep you from dying? Do you not know, that God is the author of all your comforts, and it is on him you depend for daily food and clothing, for health and strength and ease, for recovery from sickness, and for preservation from death? It is certainly from God, that you must seek all these things by prayer.

Are you not exposed to dangers every day, and every night? Do you not want the care of God to keep you both night and day? to preserve you from mischief, from fires, from violent and cruel men, and from all evils of every kind? And since you deserve nothing at the hand of God, can you suppose he will watch over you, as with his eye, and cover you from all evil, as with his hand, if you never call upon him, nor ask his favour?

But in the next place, do you not know, that you have a soul as well as a body, and that you want some spiritual blessings, for your souls, as well as temporal blessings, that belong to your bodies? Let us now consider, what these spiritual wants are.

Since you are guilty creatures, do you not greatly want the forgiveness of your sins? Have you not been taught, that your sins have deserved great and sore punishments both here and hereafter? And are you not very desirous to be delivered from this punishment? But can you expect God will pardon and deliver you, if you never pray to him for pardon?

And since you cannot do any thing, to make recompence to the great and holy God, for your offences, how speedily should you apply to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who now dwells in heaven, who did once here on earth, make recompence by his death, for the sins and offences of men? He is the great Mediator and Peace-maker between God and man? How earnestly should you pray, that you may enjoy the benefit of his mediation, and that he may bring you into a state of peace with God, and reconcile you to him? How should you cry to God, that he would forgive you, for the sake of his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ? Methinks, since you are sensible that you are guilty sinners, you should not be easy one day, without seeking to God for mercy and forgiveness.

Remember also that though your sins were pardoned, yet you have a sinful nature in you, ready to offend God again continually. Do you not find yourselves too ready to commit new sins? Are you not soon ready to be angry, without a cause, or to strike others presently, or call them ill names, if they do not act just as you would have them?

Are you never ready to be envious, that is to grow uneasy, and fret, if other children have better things than you? Are you not ready to disobey your parents or your governors, or to spend your time in play, when you should be at work, or learning your book? Are you not sometimes inclined to hide your faults, by telling a lie? Do not you find yourselves too ready to learn evil words, or to wish evil to others, or take something privately by stealth, that is not allowed you, or to do something that is forbidden? And do you not see then, how much you want to pray for the grace of God, to keep you from sin daily?

And are not your minds too ignorant of God, and religion, and heavenly things, as well as you find your spirits too ready to yield to sin? Is it not a pleasure to you to think, that God has promised his own Holy Spirit, to instruct you in the understanding of holy things, as well as to help you, in doing your duty both to God and man? This is a blessed promise, indeed, to poor ignorant sinful creatures, such as we are. But can you think, God will give his grace, or his Holy Spirit to them, who never pray to him, or ask him for it? and are there not encouragements given, by our Saviour himself, to such requests? Do you not read in your Bible; *Luke* xi. 13. "If fathers give good gifts to their children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" But besides your temporal and spiritual wants, is there not another sort of blessings, that you stand in need of, which are called eternal blessings? Do not you know, that you cannot live here always? Have you not been taught that your body must die, and be buried, and turn to dust, in the grave; and that your soul, or spirit, which cannot die, must then go into another world? Have you not been told, that Jesus Christ the Son of God, who died for sinners once on earth, is now gone to heaven, to take care of the souls of his people, when they leave this world? And do you think Jesus Christ will take care of your soul, when it comes like a stranger into that other world, if you have not been acquainted with him, by believing his word, and if you have not committed and entrusted your soul into his hands by prayer.

You must go to stand before God the Judge of all, when you die; and are you prepared and fit to stand before God, if you have not obtained a good hope, that God loves you, and is reconciled to you? There are but two places in the other world, and these are heaven and hell: Heaven for the righteous, who love God and pray to him, and hell for the wicked, who neither pray to him, nor love him. And can you ever hope that God will save you from hell and the devil, and that he will receive you to dwell with himself, and with his Son Jesus Christ in heaven, if you never pray to him for these blessings?

IV. "Consider what your mercies are."

How kindly has God dealt with you in this world? Has he not given you such parents and friends, who by his order provide food and raiment, and house and bed, and every thing convenient for you? How many poor children are there that want these comforts, and are exposed to hunger and cold? Have not your parents and friends taken care, that you should be taught to read, and to learn many things for your good, both here and hereafter? Do you not know that it was God who put it into their hearts, and also made them able to do it? How many thousand poor creatures are there in this land, who know nothing of God and cannot read a word? Is it not God, who has made this happy difference between you and them? and should you not praise him for his goodness? Have you not seen other children blind, or lame, or crooked, or foolish? Is it not God, who has given you your limbs and your senses? Is it not the same good God, that gives

you health and peace by night and day; and are you not bound to thank him for these his mercies? What! would you live like the brute beasts, who eat and drink and sleep, and take no notice of the great God from whose hand all your blessings come?

Has not God, by his good providence, caused you to be born and bred in Great Britain, in a land, where you have learned the knowledge of the true God, and are not brought up, to worship images of wood or stone among the heathens? Have you not the Bible, the book of God in your hands in English, where you can read of God, and Christ, and heavenly things; whereas the papists breed up their children without their Bibles, and had you been born among them, you must have lived in great ignorance too? And since you are taught to know God and the way to heaven, as well as blessed with so many blessings here on earth, is not your heart full of thankfulness to God? And how can you refrain from falling down upon your knees, and praising the mercy of God, who has done all this for you?

V. "Consider what relation you stand in to others."

Have you not a father and mother that you are bound to honour and love? and would you never pray, that God would bestow his best blessings on them, and make them live long to breed you up in his fear? Have you not brothers or sisters, or other friends and relations that love you? and have you no mercies to ask of God for them? Do not your masters or teachers, ministers or governors desire that you should pray to God to bless them, that they may the better instruct you, in the knowledge of all things, useful for this world and that to come. They pray for you, and you should pray for them.

Have you not heard of magistrates and rulers, who keep all the town, or city, and the whole nation round about you in peace? Have you not heard of our most excellent king George the Second, who preserves the protestant religion among us, and keeps us from being plundered and ruined by the cruel and bloody papists? Have not you heard of the royal family of princes and princesses, by whose means, we hope, this kingdom will be for ever preserved from popery and slavery? And are you not bound to give thanks to God for such a protestant king, and pray for all blessings upon him and his royal house for ever.

And indeed you stand so nearly related to all mankind, that you should sometimes lift up a prayer to heaven for them. Pray for heathens, and Turks, and Jews, that they may be turned away from their follies and errors, and false religions, and be led into the ways of truth and holiness and eternal peace. And you should pray for the nation, also, to which you belong, that we all may be preserved in peace and prosperity: And can you not find in your hearts to forgive those that have injured you, and to lift up one prayer for your enemies that God would forgive them too? This must be done if you would be christians indeed.

Since then, dear children, there are such a multitude of reasons, that oblige you to pray to God, since you see it is your constant duty, and it is your highest interest, if you would be safe and happy in this world, or the world to come, I would persuade myself, you will delay no longer, but begin this religious work immediately; and I humbly hope and pray, that God would abundantly assist and bless you therein, that you may learn from your own experience, how sweet and profitable a thing it is, to call upon the name of the Lord*.

* To encourage you herein, read an excellent little discourse, lately published called, "The Necessity and Advantages of Closet Religion."

ADVICES TO CHILDREN RELATING TO PRAYER.

I. ADVICE.

IF you make use of any of these prayers, let your parents or teachers assist you, in choosing such as are proper for your age and your capacity; and be sure, that you learn to understand every word and sentence, in the prayer which you use: If there be any expression in it, which you do not understand, ask your friends the meaning of it before you speak it to God, that you may not speak words like a parrot, who knows not what he says, or like the children of the papists who are taught to say their prayers in "Latin," when they do not understand one word of them.

II. Learn the prayers which you use, by heart, as soon as you can: For hereby, you will be able to pray in the dark where you cannot see to read: Hereby also, you will learn what is the sense and language of a christain prayer, and so you will the sooner be able to form prayers for yourselves, and pray to God without such prayers composed for you. But, I would not have you entirely neglect or omit, praying to God all the while you are learning them by heart: For if you read them in a very humble, serious and pious manner, God will accept your morning and evening worship. This is far better than to live without prayer, to live as the brute beasts, who never call upon God. And indeed, when you can repeat the prayers by heart, I cannot think it amiss, many times to have the book open near you, lest your memory should slip, in your younger years of childhood, before you are capable of putting in other words of your own, to supply the place of these words, which you have forgotten.

III. Seek out a proper time, to retire alone by yourself, morning and evening, at those seasons or hours, wherein you have no other necessary business or duty.

And here I would persuade myself that parents or masters, who take due care of the souls of children, would not only admonish and encourage them to seek God in secret, morning and evening, but would point out a proper place for their retirements. This is easily done in private families: And they should make some observations, whether children observe these seasons or no. In some schools, I have heard there are certain seasons in the day, which are called "The half hour," which are ordained, on purpose, for children to retire; and, if they cannot be entirely alone, yet at distant parts of their bedchambers, they may lift their hearts, and their low voices, to God in worship.

In the morning I would generally say, the earlier the better: For if you lose the first opportunity, you will often find that you will be utterly hindered from praying, by other things that may happen. Besides, it is best to call upon God early, and begin the day with religion, that you may beg a blessing on yourself, and on all your business that day. Do not begin with the world in the morning, before you have been with God. In the evening, I cannot say the later the better: But rather embrace the first convenient evening hour that offers, lest you be drowsy. However, it is much better to pray late, than not to pray at all. If, at any time, you are hindered in the morning, be sure, if possible, that you be not hindered in the evening too. But, the best way, is to keep pretty nearly the same seasons, every day, for your morning and evening retirements, if your circumstances of life, and the affairs of the family, where you live, will allow it.

Perhaps, there may be some children, who are called to school, as soon as ever they rise in the morning, or are bound to obey some other orders in a family, so that they cannot find any so proper time as noon for their retirement: Then let them use chiefly the morning prayer: But let them not content themselves, with praying once a day, if it be possible for them to find another fit season, in the afternoon, or evening: And if they are forced to omit it once now and then, let it not grow to a custom or constant practice to omit their evening devotions; yet rather pray once a day, than not at all.

IV. Seek a proper and convenient place for your secret retirements: It is no matter what or where the place be, if it be, freest from all disturbance. A bed-chamber is generally a proper place for those who have not the conveniency of closets for themselves. Be not afraid to go alone by yourselves, though it may be sometimes in the dark: You are going to meet with God, and he is ever near to them that call upon him. The presence of God is an almighty security and defence, against all manner of evils, that you can suspect or fear. Nothing can hurt you, while God is with you.

V. If you have time and conveniency for it, in your secret worship, read a chapter or two, and a psalm before you pray. For my part, I could wish there were select portions of scripture chosen out and printed by themselves, for children to read in private, that their time devoted to religion and worship, might not be spent in such parts of the Bible as are of very little use to them. However, for want of this, I would recommend the book of Genesis, and of Exodus, as far as the xx. chapter, and the book of Proverbs, and the four Gospels, with some practical chapters out of the Epistles and especially the book of Psalms, to be the chief subjects of their reading in secret, in their younger years. The book of Proverbs abounds in useful lessons of prudence, and instructions of piety: The book of Psalms is full of prayers and praises. And let the word of God not be read in a slight, or careless and hasty manner, but with a diligent attention, and with an endeavour to remember something of it every day.

VI. Leave your business and your sports and all thoughts of them behind you, when you retire for worship. Let you spirit be composed to great seriousness when you begin to pray. The reading of a chapter, will help to compose your thoughts, and fix them more on divine things. Fall down upon your knees before God in a humble posture, and remember, that you are come into the presence of the great God, that you are going to speak to the Majesty of heaven, before whom angels worship, and at whose name devils tremble; take heed therefore, that you do not trifle with him, nor take his holy name in vain. He sees your heart, he knows all your thoughts and he observes all your wanderings from him. And, for your encouragement also remember that he takes kind notice of every sincere desire, and every pious wish that rises from your heart.

VII. Take heed, that you speak not any thing to God in prayer, which is not the sincere thought and desire of your own soul. See to it, that your heart agree to the words of your prayer, or else do not utter them before God. "God is a Spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth:" He hates a hypocrite, who speaks what he does not mean. If there be, therefore, any sentence in the prayer, which is not suitable to your present case, or which your heart does not agree to, leave it out, and speak what is the sense of your own heart.

VIII. Take notice, every day what good or evil falls out relating to you, and by this means, perhaps, you will often have some particular thing in your mind to mention before God, which is not expressed, so plainly in the words of the prayer; it may be some sin to

confess, some sorrow to complain of, some blessing to desire, or some mercy to give thanks for: Then be sure to speak it with freedom in your own language: The great God, who hears the young ravens, when they cry, will much more take notice of the voice and language of young children when they pray to him; and he understands the meaning of your heart though your expressions may not be so proper as you could wish. This will be the way to learn to pray, and gain an ability in time to address God in a proper manner, without the necessity of such forms.

IX. Use a low voice in secret prayer: It may be so loud, that yourself may just hear it, but scarce loud enough for others to hear it, in a distant part even of the same room. A small voice will be of some use to keep your thoughts from wandering, but a loud voice may, perhaps, give occasion for other persons to charge you with hypocrisy, as though you practised your duties, on purpose to be seen and heard of men, and to make a shew of your goodness and religion. And yet,

X. If any persons whatsoever take notice of your retiring daily, to pray to God in secret, never be ashamed of it, nor leave off prayer, for fear of being seen or known to be religious. If you are ashamed of worshipping God your heavenly Father in this world, God will be ashamed to own you for one of his children, in the world to come.

XI. When several children join together, and one of them repeats any of these prayers, take care that nothing be done with rudeness or confusion, but let all decency and gravity be practised. Let not him that speaks begin, till all are come in, and have fallen down on their knees; and let every one attend to the words spoken, and lift up his heart to God, in all the several sentences; that the prayer of every one may be accepted of God, and that God may delight to answer the united prayers of children, and pour down his blessings on so religious a family.

XII. To sum up all, I should add in the last place: Let all your carriage and behaviour in the world, both toward God, and toward your superiors, and toward your fellows, be such as becomes those who profess religion, and pray to God morning and evening. Let a pious care to please God, and a fear of offending him, run through all your speeches and actions. Honour and obey your parents and teachers: Love your brothers and sisters: Be courteous and kind to all: Abstain from all evil words and sinful works: For your prayers will be useless, if you continue in wilful sins: "The prayers of the wicked, who will not repent, are an abomination to the Lord."

Make it appear that your hearts are sincere and honest in your prayers to God, by endeavouring always to avoid these sins which you have confessed, as well as to practise those duties, in which you have prayed God to assist you: and let it be your daily care to seek to obtain all those blessings, as far as in you lies, which you have asked God to bestow upon you. Thus, while prayer and practice go together, you will become christians indeed, you will be the comfort and joy of your friends in this world, you will always find acceptance with God through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and, in the world to come, be made happy to all eternity. *Amen.*

QUESTIONS

PROPER FOR

STUDENTS IN DIVINITY,

CANDIDATES OF THE MINISTRY,

AND

YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

TO BE

PROPOSED TO THEM, BY THEMSELVES, OR BY OTHERS.

QUESTIONS

PROPER FOR

STUDENTS IN DIVINITY, &c.

I. QUESTIONS OF SERIOUS IMPORTANCE, FOR STUDENTS IN DIVINITY, FREQUENTLY TO PUT TO THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES.

WHAT was my great design, in devoting myself to study for the ministry, and what is my daily view and purpose in pursuing it?

Have I entirely given up myself to our Lord Jesus Christ, as a christian, that I may be fitter to become a faithful minister?

Do I every day seek direction and blessing from God, in all my studies for this end?

In labouring after knowledge in human sciences, do I always make the service of Christ, in the ministry, my supreme design, either that I may be better fitted for it, or better accepted in it?

Do I pursue my studies daily, as one that must give an account of my time, and of all my advantages?

Note, These two questions put close to the heart, will guard students against idleness, or against wasting too much of their time, in any favourite human study.

How many hours have I spent this day in study, or for the pursuit of knowledge, allowing that great maxim, "*Bené orâsse est bene studiesse.*" To pray well is to study well.

Do I pursue practical divinity, as well as the knowledge of doctrines and controversies?

Am I solicitous that my soul may grow in grace, by every increasing degree of christian knowledge, that so I may preach to others, what my own soul has known by experience?

Do I choose my company by their seriousness, as well as by their ingenuity and learning?

Do I take constant care to avoid all company, which may be dangerous to my morals, or to my studies?

Have I been in any company this week, or this day, whereby I have gotten any good myself, or done any good to others?

Have I indulged myself in any thing this week, or this day, whereby my soul has been put out of frame for evening-worship?

Have I suffered nothing to carry away my heart from God, so as to make me neglect devotion, or perform it in a slight or careless manner?

Do I watch against all evil appetites and passions, and endeavour to subdue them early, that I may be fitted to teach others to do it?

Do I ever take any proper occasion, in my discourse, to make some essay towards the conversion or edification of souls, as preparatories for my future ministry?

II. QUESTIONS IN THE DOCTRINES OF DIVINITY, PROPER TO BE PROPOSED TO STUDENTS, IN THEIR EXAMINATION, IN ORDER TO PREACH.

WHAT arguments have you to prove the existence of God? and the creation of the world by him?

How are his various perfections to be demonstrated, *viz.* his eternity, his unity, his immutability, his power, wisdom, goodness, truth, &c?

How is the light of nature proved insufficient to give solid hope to sinful creatures, and the light of grace or divine revelation necessary?

How are the scriptures evidenced to be the word of God, both the Old Testament and the New?

How can you prove the faithful conveyance of them to our age?

Was man at first created righteous and holy, and what are the proofs of it?

What was the covenant of works, under which man was created at first?

How is the fall of Adam, the first man, proved to reach his posterity? Or what are the evidences of original sin imputed, and original sin inherent?

What is the covenant of grace? Or what way of salvation has God appointed for fallen man?

Who, or what is Jesus Christ our Saviour?

How doth it appear that Christ is both God and man; or that he is true man in ineffable union with the true and eternal God?

What are the transactions assigned to God the Father in the covenant of grace?

What is the doctrine of predestination, or of election of persons to salvation; And how may it be proved?

How do you prove the Messiah is come; and that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah?

What are the characters and offices assigned to Christ, in this covenant of grace; or what are the ways, whereby he saves sinners?

In what sense are Adam and Christ the general heads of death and life?

What is the covenant of redemption made with Christ, before the foundation of the world?

Who, or what is the Spirit of God?

How may his Deity be proved?

What offices are assigned to the Holy Spirit in this covenant of grace?

What are the several dispensations of the covenant of grace, *viz.* to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses?

What were the chief emblems or seals under these several dispensations?

What were the chief designs of the mosaical covenant, or God's dispensation towards the Jews?

What is prefigured by several of the chief types, *viz.* the high-priest, the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the washings, the incense, the promised land, &c.

How is the divine commission of Moses to be proved?

Was the mosaical covenant, a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Or was it neither? or was it both?

What was the design of so many prophets coming after Moses, since they instituted no new religion?

What is the true account or description of the gospel, as revealed by Christ? or what is the christian dispensation?

How is the divine commission of our Lord Jesus Christ proved? what are the internal and external evidences of christianity?

What are the several states through which Christ passed in the execution of his various offices?

Of what uses are the incarnation, life and death, the resurrection and glorification of Christ, in our religion?

What are the chief differences between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace?

What are the chief differences between the Jewish dispensation, and the christian dispensation?

What are the blessings promised in the covenant of grace? *viz.* regeneration, vocation, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance and glorification: And how are they described?

What are sinners to do, in order to partake of the blessings of the gospel?

How would you describe faith in Christ, repentance towards God, and sincere obedience, or universal holiness in the plainest manner?

What are our chief duties to God, to our neighbour, and ourselves? Here will come in all the single or personal virtues of temperance, patience, &c. the social virtues of love, justice, truth, faithfulness, &c. as well as the divine virtues of godliness, &c.

What are our duties to superiors, to inferiors and to equals? Here will come in the duties of a magistrate, a father, a master, &c. a subject, a child, a servant, &c. a neighbour, a friend, a brother, &c.

What are the chief motives to engage us to practise these duties, drawn from reason and from scripture?

What are the chief parts of divine worship?

What is prayer? And in whose name, and by whose aid must it be performed?

When may forms of prayer be lawful, and when hurtful?

Is there any sabbath, or a day of rest and worship continued under the gospel? And how is it proved?

What are the christian sacraments? Are they signs, or seals, or both?

What is the nature and design of christian baptism?

May infants be baptized? and why?

Is immersion of the whole body necessary?

Is the Lord's-supper an expiatory sacrifice; or is it merely a memorial of Christ's death? Or is it rather a sign and seal of the covenant of grace?

Is it to be administered to persons who make a mere verbal profession of Christ, without some evidences of conversion and repentance?

What is the church of Christ both invisible and visible? Universal and particular?

In what manner is a visible church to be formed and governed in general? And what are the chief officers in it?

How are the members of the church to be punished, if they are refractory against the community, or against the laws of Christ?

What will be the conclusion of all these dispensations of God towards men?

How may the last judgment-day be proved as a thing certain?

How is the resurrection of the body to be evidenced?

Does the soul sleep at death till the resurrection? Or does it immediately enter into a state of happiness or misery?

What are the chief glories of heaven? Or what is the final happiness of the saints?

What are the chief parts of the misery of the wicked, in the world to come?

What are the chief proofs of the eternity of future rewards and punishments?

And, indeed, under every one of these heads, it is proper to enquire what are the chief scriptures that are used to prove these doctrines.

III. PRACTICAL AND CASUISTICAL QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES OF THE MINISTRY, AND YOUNG PREACHERS.

IN what manner, would you address stupid sinners, in order to awaken them to a sense of their sin and danger, by reason and by scripture?

How would you convince a sober man that he has no sufficient righteousness of his own to justify him before God, by reason and by scripture?

What directions would you give one that is awakened to a sense of sin, and begins to enquire the way of salvation?

By what motives would you excite and hasten delaying sinners to secure their eternal state?

What encouragements would you give to one who is overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness, the multitude and aggravation of his sins, in order to keep him from despair?

How would you represent Christ as answering all the wants of perishing sinners?

What would you say to a person, who neglects religion from a pretence that it is in vain to seek after happiness, if he is not elected?

How would you treat young persons to draw them to religion, by considering their pious education, and their early baptism?

How would you guard young creatures, against the danger of evil company?

In what manner would you direct persons, who complain of the power and prevalence of special sins or temptations?

By what methods would you fortify youth against shame and scoffing, when they resolve upon religion in good earnest?

What sort of persuasions would you use to lead a person to public worship, who complains he finds no benefit by it?

How would you excite negligent persons, who are in years, to take care of their souls and their eternal interest?

What would you say, to encourage those, who are diligent in the practice of religion, but complain they feel no pleasure in it?

How would you comfort serious christians under darkness, who fear God is departed from them?

How may persons be recovered, who have backslidden from the practices of piety, and are grown careless?

How would you support those, who are under long outward trials, and encourage them to persevere in patience?

What would you say to relieve the sorrows of those who are mourning under some present huge affliction?

How would you persuade those who quarrel, to be reconciled? and particularly, such as differ about principles and opinions in religion?

How may warm passionate persons be directed to subdue their passions?

What encouragement would you give to timorous christians against the fears of dying?

How would you prepare doubting christians for approaching death?

Perhaps, it might not be an improper exercise for students, in the last part of their academical studies, to write letters of christian advice to persons under all these circumstances, or at least to write down answers to all these enquiries, to be perused and corrected by their tutors.

IV. QUESTIONS PROPER FOR YOUNG MINISTERS FREQUENTLY TO PUT TO THEMSELVES, CHIEFLY BORROWED FROM THE EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS.

SECTION I.

OF FAITHFULNESS IN THE MINISTRY.

DO I sincerely give myself "to the ministry of the word;" *Acts* vi. 4. and do I design to make it the chief business of my life to serve Christ in his gospel, in order to the salvation of men?

Do I resolve, through the aids of divine grace, to be "faithful to him who hath put me into the ministry," and to "take heed to the ministry which I have received in the Lord that I may fulfil it?" 1 *Tim.* i. 12. *Col.* iv. 17.

Do I honestly and faithfully endeavour by study and prayer to know "the truth as it is in Jesus?" *Eph.* iv. 21. and do I seek my instruction chiefly from the "holy scriptures, which are able to make me wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in Christ that I may be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work?" 2 *Tim.* iii. 14, 17.

Do "I hold fast the form of sound words," as far as I have learned them of Christ and his apostles? 2 *Tim.* i. 13. That I "may by sound doctrine exhort and convince gainsayers;" *Tit.* i. 2. And do I determine to "continue in the things which I have learned, knowing from whom I have learned them?" 2 *Tim.* iii. 14.

Do I resolve to give the people the true meaning of Christ in his word, so far as I can understand it, and "not to handle the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God?" 2 *Cor.* iv. 2.

Am I watchful to "avoid profane and vain babblings?" 1 *Tim.* vi. 20. and do I take care to "shun foolish questions which do gender strife, and disputing about words, which are to no profit, but the subversion of the hearers?" 2 *Tim.* ii. 14, 23.

Do I "study to shew myself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth; 2 *Tim.* ii. 15. giving to every one, *viz.* to saints and sinners, their proper portion?

Do I make it my business, to "testify to all men, whether Jews or Greeks, the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in Christ Jesus;" and that "there is no other name under heaven given whereby we may be saved;" making this gospel of Christ the subject of my ministry? *Acts* xx. 21. *Acts* iv. 12.

Do I "constantly affirm, that those, who have believed in Christ Jesus, should maintain good works, and follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?" *Tit.* iii. 8. *Heb.* xii. 14.

Do I teach those that hear me to "observe all that Christ has commanded us nor shun to declare to them at proper seasons, the whole counsel of God?" *Matt.* xxviii. 20. *Acts* xx. 27.

Do I preach to the people, "not myself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and myself as their servant for Christ's sake?" 2 *Cor.* iv. 5.

Do I in my study and my preaching "take heed to my doctrine and my exhortations, so that I may save myself and them that hear me?" 1 *Tim.* iv. 16.

Do I "watch over the souls of men as one that must give an account, being solicitous that I may do it with joy and not with grief?" *Heb.* xiii. 17.

SECTION II.

OF DILIGENCE IN THE MINISTRY.

Do I "give attendance to reading," meditation and study? Do I read a due portion of scripture daily, especially in the New Testament, and that in the Greek original, that I may be better acquainted with the meaning of the word of God? 1 *Tim.* iv. 13.

Do I apply myself to these things, "and give myself wholly to them, that my profiting may appear to all?" 1 *Tim.* iv. 15.

Do I live, constantly, as under the eye of the great Shepherd, who is my master and my final judge; and so spend my hours as to be able to give up a good account of them at last to him?

Do I not "neglect to stir up any of those gifts," which God has given me, for the edification of the church? 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. and 2 *Tim.* i. 6.

Do I seek, as far as possible, to know the state and the wants of my auditory, that I "may speak a word in season?" *Isaiah* l. 4.

Is it my chief design, in choosing my subject and composing my sermon, to edify the souls of men?

Am I determined to take all proper opportunities to "preach the word, in season and out of season," that is, in the parlour or the kitchen, or the workhouse, as well as in the pulpit; and seek opportunities to speak a word for Christ, and help forward the salvation of souls? 2 *Tim.* iv. 2.

Do I labour to shew my love to our Lord Jesus, by "feeding the sheep, and the lambs of his flock?" *John* xxi. 16, 17.

Am I duly solicitous for the success of my ministry? and do I take all proper methods to enquire what effects my ministry has had on the souls of those who hear me?

Where I find or hope the work of grace is begun on the soul, am I zealous and diligent to promote it?

SECTION III.

OF CONSTANT PRAYER AND DEPENDENCE.

Do I "give myself to prayer, as well as to the ministry of the word?" *Acts* vi. 4.

Do I make conscience of praying daily in secret, that I may hereby maintain holy converse with God, and also, that I may increase in the gift of prayer? *Matt.* vi. 6.

Do I make it my practice to offer "prayers, supplications, and intercessions for all men," particularly for our rulers, and for my fellow-labourers in the ministry, and for the church of Christ, and especially for those to whom I preach? 1 *Tim.* ii. 1. *Rom.* i. 9, 10. *Phil.* i. 4.

Do I seek by prayer, for divine direction and assistance in my studies, and in all my preparations for the public? and do I plead, for the success of my ministry, with God, in whom are all our springs? *Eph.* iii. 14—19. *Phil.* i. 8, 9.

Do I ever keep upon my spirit a deep sense of my own insufficiency for these things, that I may ever depend and wait on the power of Christ, for aid and success? 2 *Cor.* ii. 16. and iii. 5. and 2 *Tim.* ii. 1.

SECTION IV.

OF SELF-DENIAL, HUMILITY, MORTIFICATION AND PATIENCE.

Do I endeavour to please all men for their good, and not make it my business to please myself? *Rom.* xvi. 2. but to become all to all, that I may win their souls, so far as is consistent with being true and faithful to Christ? 1 *Cor.* x. 23. and ix. 19, 22.

Do I behave myself before men, "not as a lord over God's heritage, but as a servant of all for Christ's sake?" and do I treat them "not as having dominion over their faith, but as a helper of their joy?" 2 *Cor.* iv. 5. and i. 24.

Am I "gentle and patient towards all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves?" 2 *Tim.* ii. 24, 25.

Do I "approve myself, in all things, as a minister of God; in much patience possessing my own soul," and having the government of my own spirit? 2 *Cor.* vi. 4.

Do I as a man of God, whose business is heavenly, flee from covetousness and the inordinate desire of gain; not seeking my own things, so much as the things of Christ? 1 *Tim.* vi. 10, 11. But "having food and raiment, have I learned therewith to be content?" 1 *Tim.* vi. 8.

Am I willing "to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ?" 2 *Tim.* ii. 3. and am I learning to bear whatsoever God calls me to, "for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain salvation with eternal glory?" 2 *Tim.* ii. 3, 10.

Am I more and more fortified against shame and suffering, for the testimony of my Lord Jesus Christ? 2 *Tim.* i. 8—12.

Am I willing "to spend myself, and be spent" for the good of the people, or even to be "offered up, as a sacrifice for the service of their faith? and do I count nothing dear to me, that I may fulfil the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus?" *Phil.* ii. 17. 2 *Cor.* xii. 15. *Acts* xx. 24.

SECTION V.

OF CONVERSATION.

Is it my constant endeavour to "hold fast the true faith, and a good conscience together, lest making shipwreck of one, I should lose the other also?" 1 *Tim.* i. 19.

Do I walk so as to be an example "of christians in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity?" 1 *Tim.* iv. 12. that in "all things I may shew myself a pattern of good works?" *Tit.* ii. 7.

Do I endeavour to walk uprightly amongst men, and do nothing by partiality? 1 *Tim.* v. 21.

Is my conversation savoury and religious, so as to "minister edification to the hearers?" *Eph.* iv. 29.

Do I "shun youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, charity, and peace with all them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart?" 2 *Tim.* ii. 22.

Do I avoid, as much as possible, the various temptations to which I may be exposed, and watch against the times, and places, and company which are dangerous?

Do I practise the christian duty of love and charity, to those who differ from me in opinion, and even "bless and pray for them that are my enemies?" *Rom.* xii. 14. and xiv. 1.

Do I behave myself "blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, nor filthy lucre, no brawler, no striker; a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate?" *Tit.* i. 7, 8.

Do I daily endeavour "to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed?" 2 *Cor.* vi. 3.

Do I watch over myself in all times, and places, and conversations so as to do and to bear what is required of me, to "make a full proof of my ministry, and to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour?" 2 *Tim.* iv. 5. *Tit.* ii. 10.

V. QUESTIONS BY WHICH YOUNG PERSONS MAY BE TAUGHT TO EXAMINE THEMSELVES, BOTH AS TO THEIR CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, AND THEIR SPIRITUAL STATE.

WHAT has been my education from my younger years? What have been my advantages, or disadvantages, as to the things of religion?

What good use have I made of the advantages I have enjoyed, and what have I learned by them?

How have I been enabled to overcome the disadvantages that I have laboured under?

What sense have I had of the sin of my nature, or the evil that dwells in me, as well as of actual sins?

What is the danger and the misery of a sinful state?

Can I remember how I came to this awakening sense of sin; Whether by any special providences, sickness, dangers or troubles, by reading, by preaching, or by conversation, or instruction of friends?

What sense have I of my own insufficiency, or inability to save myself?

Here will come in, the knowledge of the insufficiency of our own works, to justify us before God; and our insufficiency of ourselves, to change our own sinful natures to holiness, and to subdue all our indwelling sins?

What way do I hope to be saved?

Who is the appointed Saviour?

Here the name of Christ will necessarily come in?

Can I remember how I first came by the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Who is Jesus Christ the Lord?

What has he done in order to our salvation, and of what use are his sufferings?

What are the several benefits or blessings which I stand in need of, and which I hope to receive through Jesus Christ?

Here will come in pardon of sin, the justification of our persons, our adoption, our sanctification, &c.

How am I to be made partaker of these benefits of Christ? or what must I do that I may be saved?

Here the answer will be, perhaps, prayer to God, hearing or reading his word, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance of all our past sins, with a religious care to practise all the duties of holiness?

Do I constantly pray to God in secret?

How long since have I begun and continued the practice? and how has it been interrupted or neglected?

Do I humbly wait for answers of prayer? or only pronounce a prayer before God as a daily task?

Do I make the throne of grace my constant refuge in every difficulty, danger and trouble, in the things of this life, as well as the life to come?

Do I attend upon reading, or hearing, the word of God, and good books?

Do I always think over again, and recollect what I have heard, that I may fix it in my memory, and impress it more upon my heart?

Do I make it my business to pray over the things which I hear or read, and so to profit by sermons and by reading?

Here the next enquiry will be about repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?

What is faith, or believing in Christ?

Here the answer will be, according to the instructions that persons have had, or according to the various expressions, in the word of God. This faith in Christ includes in it, or is expressed by "coming to Christ that we may be saved, receiving of Christ as he is offered in the gospel, or accepting of him under his various characters and offices, as Prophet, Priest, King, Example, a Head or spring of spiritual life, &c. trusting in him, resigning ourselves to him, giving up our souls into his hands, committing ourselves to him," that we may be accepted of God through his obedience and sufferings,

and sanctified by his grace, and preserved to his kingdom of glory: In all which the young christian may examine himself, whether he has received Christ by faith?

What is repentance toward God? and am I a true penitent for my sins?

What are the signs or evidences, or the effects of true faith and sincere repentance?

Now, under these signs or effects of faith and repentance, will come in the various christian virtues or graces, *viz.* "Love to God, love to our Lord Jesus Christ, love to all the saints, shame and sorrow, and self-abhorrence because of sin; a hatred of all sin, a holy fear to displease God, zeal for God and for Jesus Christ in the world, a desire to please God in all things, and to practise every duty both towards God and men, sincere delight in the ways and worship of God, desires and endeavours after universal holiness in heart and life, submission to the will of God in life and death, and a humble hope of salvation."

Have I any reasonable ground to hope that these christian virtues or graces are wrought in me? Have I found the exercise of them on proper occasions?

Or whence do I hope to attain them, or any further degrees of them?

Here will come in the doctrine of the Spirit of God, and his operations.

How must I obtain the influences or aids of this Spirit?

Does not the scripture say, "A man must be born again, if he would enter into the kingdom of heaven?" *John* iii. 3, 5. What is this being born again, or regeneration?

Here perhaps, this may be described by other expressions and metaphors of scripture, such as "being converted unto God, being new created unto Christ Jesus unto good works, being raised again from the dead, or dying to sin and living to righteousness;" all which denote a great and general change made in the soul.

What evidences have I that I am born again, or that I have had such a change wrought upon me? What difference can I find between what I once was, and what I now am? Whether my thoughts and desires, my chief hopes, wishes and delights, are the same that ever they were? Or whether I find any change in the temper of my mind from sin to holiness?

Note here, Such a change will commonly be less apparent in those who have enjoyed a religious education from their childhood.

What are my present chief desires, and purposes, and holy resolutions? Or what is, and shall be the chief aim, end and design of my life?

Have I a settled bent and biass of soul, to hate and avoid every sin, and to follow after God and godliness, according to the rules of the gospel?

Note, This is a better evidence of true conversion, than any passionate effects or sensations, either of love, grief, or joy.

Am I able of myself to fulfil these purposes, and to persevere in them, or how shall I be made able?

What is my duty then in order to this happy end?

Here watchfulness, and prayer to God, trust and dependence on Christ, or the holy Spirit, will come in.

Have I, in any instances been enabled to suppress my sinful inclinations, my irregular passions, and to resist the temptations of sin, which I have met with in the world?

In all these religious exercises, in secret and in public, what help have I had from any particular incidents of life, from any providences of God, toward myself, or towards others?

Have any particular sermons, occasional discourses, texts of scripture, *viz.* commands, threatenings, promises, reproofs, examples, &c. been of any special use to me? and what are those texts of scripture, that have been made so useful to my own special occasions?

What have been the evident good effects, and particular influences of any of these things upon me? And have I endeavoured to preserve and improve them? Have they been vanishing or lasting?

VI. QUESTIONS RELATING TO BAPTISM, THE LORD'S-SUPPER, AND FELLOWSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

HAVE I been baptized in my infancy?

What is the design of baptism in infancy?

What blessings are represented by this washing with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?

What solemn engagements do I lie under hereby?

Am I now willing, humbly, to confirm what was done in my infancy? That is, do I give myself up to be saved in this way, by the grace and mercy of God the Father, by the mediation and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ his Son, and by the aids or operations of the blessed Spirit, to profess this religion.

Do I humbly lay hold of these promised blessings of the covenant of grace for myself? And do I lay myself under these engagements to practise the christian duties, through the assistance of divine grace?

Or, if I have not been baptized in my infancy, am I now desirous of christian baptism?

Do I humbly desire the benefits, or blessings, that are represented thereby?

Am I willing to devote myself to God, in this appointed seal of his covenant?

Am I willing to lay myself under solemn engagements to fulfil the duties of christianity to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, trusting in the aids of divine grace?

What is the Lord's-supper?

What doth the bread and wine in it signify?

What does my eating the bread and drinking the wine, mean and design?

What are the special benefits which are hereby represented, and do I humbly and thankfully accept them?

And what are the christian duties to which I am hereby engaged? and do I desire, and will I endeavour to fulfil them?

What is church-fellowship, or joining in the communion of a christian church?

What are the benefits or advantages that I may hope for, or obtain hereby?

What are the christian duties that I oblige myself to, by joining myself to such a society of christians?

Are my desires and designs sincere, in all these enquiries, and in my engagements to walk with God, according to the rule of his gospel, till he shall please to call me by death, to a better world?

ORTHODOXY AND CHARITY UNITED,

IN

SEVERAL RECONCILING

ESSAYS

ON

THE LAW AND GOSPEL,

FAITH AND WORKS.

THE

PREFACE.

ALMOST every one of these essays was written above twenty years ago, and some of them more than thirty. The author finds reason to offer his sincere acknowledgements and thanks to Almighty God, who has preserved him, even to this day, in the same sentiments and principles of christian faith and love, amidst the numerous follies and errors of the times. One of these papers, indeed, found its way into the world, the very year in which it was written; the very design of it was to exemplify the title of this book, and it has been often since solicited to be printed again: But it was delayed for many years, till the author had formed a collection of papers of this sort, large enough to compose a moderate volume; and the reader will be sufficiently informed of the present reason of this publication, by a mere explaining of the words of the title, *Orthodoxy and Charity united.*

By the word Orthodoxy, the author means all those christian doctrines which were generally approved in the last age, so far as he knows at least, by almost all the protestant dissenters in the nation; even those great doctrines, on which the reformation from the church of Rome was built; and they continued so all the time these essays were writing, and long before, in the general good esteem of the churches, as being conformable to the instructions of Christ and his apostles. It is needless in this place, to reckon them all up particularly, but, in general, they were such as these:

1. By the fall of the first man, he, together with his posterity, lost their innocence and their immortality, their bodies were subjected to diseases and death, their natural inclinations were perverted from that which is good, and there was a strange prevailing bias in human nature, even from its infancy, to that which is evil.

2. In order to their recovery from this ruin, there is not only a necessity of the pardon of their sins, and reconciliation of their persons to God, but there is need also that their sinful natures be healed, and renewed by sanctifying grace, in order to restore men to virtue and piety, that is, to the love of God and their fellow-creatures.

3. The Son of God, who, in the language of scripture, *is one with the Father, came down from heaven* to take flesh, and therein to fulfil the duties of the law, and give an

example of perfect holiness: And then he was appointed to suffer death as *a sacrifice* and *atonement* for the sins of men, that mankind might thereby obtain pardon and the favour of God.

4. There is a necessity also, that sinners should heartily repent of their sins, return to God, and be renewed to the principles and temper of holiness, in order to their complete recovery to eternal life and happiness.

5. Besides this repentance and returning to God, it is also required that they *believe in the name of Jesus Christ*, their Saviour, or trust in him, with a humble expectation of the favour of God, through him: And, it is through this faith, they are to be justified and accepted of God.

6. They are also obliged to obey the law of God, as far as this feeble and imperfect state admits of, during their whole life, and still to grow up towards perfection therein.

7. When such persons die, their souls are conveyed to a state of peace and rest, in the presence of God, till the great day of the resurrection, when their bodies shall rise again from the dead, and the whole person, body and soul, be made happy for ever, in the favour and presence of God their Maker.

These doctrines were generally professed at the time of the reformation, by protestants abroad and at home, and these are the set of principles, which have been usually called orthodoxy, or right sentiments.

Now, it has unhappily fallen out, that many of those who have received and professed these important doctrines, have differed also in many lesser points, such as the logical relations of some of these doctrines to one another, that is, "Whether faith or works be conditions or consequents of their justification and acceptance; what is the essential difference between *the covenant of works*, and *the covenant of grace*, or the law and the gospel," &c. as well as in several particular practices of divine worship, such as ceremonies, vestures, imposed forms of prayer, &c. and they have so far quarrelled about these things, as too much to neglect and abandon that christian love and charity they ought to have maintained, according to their general acknowledgement of the great and necessary truths and rules of christianity, and hereby they have, in many instances, lost that duty and character of good christians, *viz.* to *love one another*. Now since these unhappy and uncharitable practices, even amongst some good men, have prevailed even to this day, it is the design of these essays, to endeavour the recovery of these persons, who unite in these principles, to charitable sentiments and practices towards one another.

Here it will be very natural to enquire, Where is there found amongst all these essays, any attempt to reconcile those to the christian love and charity of others, who, while they profess the christian religion, yet oppose, renounce or deny, the great doctrines of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or his propitiation for sin by his death?

All the answer that can be given, is this: The author would gladly have done it, that the whole book might be of a piece, and every page might overflow with love, if he could, after the turning over his New Testament, have met with any evident instances, or ex-

amples, any plain rules or requirements of such christian charity expressed towards persons of this character, in all the sacred writings.

But the language of scripture gives no encouragement to such a charity; for this doctrine is not any where numbered among the doubtful disputables of our religion, the lesser things of christianity, such as *meats and drinks*, and *observation of days*, and outward forms of worship; but it is spoken of as a matter of far higher importance, and, I think, seems to be necessary to constitute christianity itself.

This doctrine contains in it, the highest and the kindest design toward men, for which our blessed Saviour came down from heaven; it was for this very reason he came into this world, *viz. to give his life a ransom for sinners*, Matt. xx. 28. and it is repeated in *Mark* x. 45. So that those who depart from, and renounce this article, renounce the kindest design of the coming and the death of Christ, and they seem, by the words of the holy writings, to be exposed to another sort of sentence, from which may the grace of God recover and preserve them! In the mean time, I hope those who heartily unite in their sentiments of these great doctrines, which I have mentioned, and maintain a correspondent practice of strict holiness, and dependence upon Jesus Christ, our great High-Priest, and our Sacrifice, will be taught by some of these papers, to learn the duties of christian love more perfectly, agreeable to the original design of the holy founder of our religion.

It should be observed here, that though the chief part of these essays were written at the time which is mentioned, yet there happen to be now and then a few lines or pages, and some few citations from elder or later authors, which were not all written or inserted at that time. Let it be observed also, that all the characters, here mentioned, are general and indefinite; and there is not one character or name, that is now written in these papers, or ever was, that was designed to be applied to any particular person: For the author avoided it with care in all these writings, and in all his reviews of them, that no single person whatsoever should be so particularly described, as to imagine himself to be intended, and much less to be distinguished by any reader. May the divine blessing attend every humble attempt to establish the christian faith, and to confirm and enlarge our love. *Amen.*

ORTHODOXY AND CHARITY UNITED, &c.

ESSAY I.

THE SUBSTANCE, OR MATTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SECTION I.

THE word, gospel, is used in more senses than one. Sometimes it signifies the history of the life and doctrine, the death and the resurrection of Christ. So *Mark* i. 1. *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.* And so it is used in common speech, when we call the writings of the four evangelists, the four gospels. But, in the most proper and usual sense of it, in scripture, it signifies "a discovery of divine mercy, through a Mediator, to mankind fallen into sin and misery;" therefore in greek it is called ευαγγέλιον, or *glad tidings.*

The English name, indeed, as derived from its Saxon original, signifies only the word of God: Yet it is now peculiarly applied to the word of his grace, which reveals salvation to sinful and miserable man, and, therefore, it is often called the covenant of grace. This salvation is made up of many benefits or blessings, part of which are bestowed in this world, and the rest in the world that is to come. The revelation of these benefits, and of the foundation on which they stand, and of the way whereby we come to be partakers of them, is the matter, sum and substance of the gospel, in its most general notion among christians.

This gospel was not revealed, all at once, in its full glory to mankind. There have been several editions of it, or gradual discoveries of this grace, in all the former ages of the world. As soon as ever Adam had sinned, and ruined himself and his posterity too, by laying the foundation of their sin and misery, it pleased God to publish this gospel, by the promise of a Saviour, when he told our mother Eve, that *her seed should bruise the head of the serpent*, that had deceived her; *Gen.* iii. 15. This, by our divines, is usually called the first gospel; for, in the modern language of the New Testament, it signifies, that *Jesus Christ* should come into this world, *to destroy the works of the devil;* 1 John iii. 8.

Doubtless, Noah, the second father of mankind, had some farther discoveries made to him, when *the rainbow* was appointed as the seal of a gracious *covenant betwixt God and man:* For the very promise of the continuance of the comfortable seasons of the year, being given to man in a way of mercy, do imply that God would not be irreconcileable to his fallen creatures. Nor can we reasonably suppose but that Adam and Noah, and all those most ancient patriarchs, had larger explications and comments of the first promise given them than Moses has recorded. This gospel was renewed by revelations made to Abraham, when the Messiah, the Saviour, was promised to spring out of his family;

in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; Gen. xxii. 18. Which promise is expressly called the gospel; *Gal.* iii. 8. There was also a type or pattern of our justification by faith in the way of the gospel, when *Abraham believed God* in his promises, *and it was imputed to him for righteousness;* Rom. iv. 3.

Moses had a much larger discovery of the grace and mercy of God toward sinful man made to him, and to the Jews by him, than all the patriarchs put together: And this was not only done in the types, and figures, and ceremonies, not only in altars, sacrifices, washings, sprinklings, purifications, and in their redemption from Egypt, their miraculous salvations in the wilderness, and their safe conduct to Canaan, the land of promised rest; but he had many literal and express revelations of pardoning and sanctifying grace, which are scattered up and down in the five books which he wrote, and which he gave to the children of Israel to direct their religion. This is also called the gospel; *Heb.* iv. 2. *To them was the gospel preached as well as unto us,* as those words ought to be translated. This same gospel was afterward confirmed, illustrated and enlarged by succeeding prophets, in the several ages of the jewish church.

But, *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke* this gospel *to our fathers by the prophets, has in these later days* published the same to us in a brighter manner, *by his Son Jesus,* the promised Saviour, *Heb.* i. 1. And since the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostles being sent by their exalted Lord, have given yet plainer and fuller declarations of this gospel to the children of men. And, upon this account, it is several times called *the gospel of Christ,* not only because the offices and grace of Christ run through the whole of it, but also because the clearest discoveries of it are made to the world by Christ, and by his messengers the apostles.

Now, from this last and fullest revelation of it, in the New Testament, we may derive a fuller and more perfect knowledge of the gospel, than all the former ages could attain. Hereby we learn, "that the gospel is a promise of salvation from sin and hell, by the death, righteousness and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to every one that is sincerely willing to accept of it by coming to Christ, or trusting in him;" and it includes also "the promised aid of the Holy Spirit to those who seek it, to enable them to receive this salvation, and to fit them for the final possession of the promised glory." It includes also the "revelation of the future resurrection, the last judgment and eternal life." To this end did the "Son of God come into the world, *that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life;*" John iii. 16. This may be made out and explained, more at large, in the following manner:

The salvation, which the gospel proposes, is exactly answerable to our present state of sin and wretchedness, and fully supplies all the necessities of fallen man, his guilt and deserved misery, his sinful and corrupted nature, and his utter inability to help himself; and therefore it must contain in it holiness and happiness, with divine directions and divine aids, in order to attain them. The happiness of it, is a freedom from that death and punishment, which we had incurred by sin, and a recovery to the favour of God, which we had lost, and everlasting joy therein. The holiness of it, is the *image of God,* in which we were at first created, which image was defaced and ruined by man's first transgression.

The foundation of this salvation is the eternal mercy and good-will of God the Father, to his poor perishing, sinful creatures, by the glorious undertaking and various transactions and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, and the several operations of

the blessed Spirit. This salvation in the whole of it, is contrived and appointed by the various attributes of God, especially his wisdom, power and goodness, exerting themselves for this purpose: It is purchased or procured for us, by the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ: It is applied to us, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

We are chosen, to partake of all this salvation, both the holiness and happiness of it, by the eternal good-will of the Father. We are recovered to the favour of God, and happiness, by the obedience or righteousness, the death and intercession, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, in our nature. We are restored to the image of God, and holiness, by the Spirit of Christ, that is promised and sent down into this world, to change our hearts and reform our lives, and thereby fit us for the heavenly happiness.

But, what are we to do that we may become partakers of this salvation? For it is not every son and daughter of Adam who are possessors of it. Now, it is the gospel that reveals this to us, and also directs us in it. The appointed way, to partake of this salvation is, by believing or trusting in Christ; that is, when from a deep sense of the evil of sin, and our guilt and danger on that account, we grow *weary and heavy laden* with the burden of our sins, and surrender or betrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, that, by his death and obedience, we may be saved from hell, and be accepted unto eternal life, and that by the divine aid of his Spirit, we may have all the sinful powers of our natures renewed and sanctified, and fitted for that life eternal which Christ has purchased. Thus you see this grace of faith necessarily draws along with it sincere repentance for sin, and desires after true holiness.

When we consider, that we are, by nature, afar off from God, ignorant and averse to all that is holy, we shall find that we are not more able, to believe unto salvation, nor to repent of sin, at first, than we are to perform works of holiness afterwards. Therefore this gospel provides us with divine strength to fulfil these duties; *Christ is our strength*, as well as *our righteousness:* Isaiah xlv. 24, 25. *He is exalted to bestow repentance* as well as *forgiveness;* Acts v. 31. and faith *is the gift of God*, who *creates us anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works;* Eph. ii. 8—10. and makes us holy by his Spirit, as is before expressed. It is by the Holy Spirit, considered eminently as the Spirit of Christ, that we are enabled to receive this salvation at first, and trained up and prepared for the full possession of it.

It is further also comprehended, in this gospel, and promised, in this gracious constitution of God, that when we have finished our state of trial on earth, our souls shall be received, at death, into the presence and enjoyment of God; and our bodies also shall be raised from the grave, in the great resurrection-day, and thus our whole natures shall be made happy together to all eternity. This is the matter and subject of the gracious revelation of God, this is the method of salvation, and the manner of our partaking of it, which is appointed by God himself, and this is what I call the substance of the gospel. There are some other points of importance that belong to it, but this is the foundation of all, and comprehensive of the rest.

To sum up the several parts of it in as few words as I can; the gospel of Christ is a gracious constitution of God, for the recovery of sinful man, *by sending his own Son, in the flesh*, to obey his law, which man had broken, to make a proper atonement for sin by his death, and to procure the favour of God, and eternal happiness, for all that believe and repent, and receive this offered salvation, together with a promise

of the Holy Spirit, to work this faith and repentance, in the hearts of men, to renew their sinful natures unto holiness, to form them fit for this happiness, on earth, and to bring them to the full possession of it in heaven.

All this is so evident from a variety of scriptures, that might be cited here, that one would think there should be no need to prove it. But there have been some persons in the last and in the present age, I chiefly intend the socinian writers, and those nominal christians, who are leaning towards deism, who would impoverish and curtail the gospel of Christ, and make it to consist in little more than mere natural religion. Some of these persons just make a shift to persuade themselves to believe the Bible, or at least they profess to believe it, because it is the religion of their country, but they explain it in so poor, so narrow, so dry, and insipid a manner, as raises it very little above the light of nature, *viz.* "That if we follow the dictates of our inward reason and our conscience, in worshipping God, and in loving our neighbours, according to the rules which scripture hath given us to explain and confirm the light of nature, and herein imitate the holy example of our Lord Jesus Christ, then our sins shall be forgiven us by the mere mercy of God, through the supplication and intercession of so good a man as Jesus Christ, and we shall be accepted to eternal life;" and this without any dependance on the death of Christ, as a proper atonement or satisfaction for sin, or any regard to him as a true and real sacrifice. And as for the Spirit of God, and his almighty operation on the souls of men, to enlighten and sanctify them, at least in our age, this is almost banished out of their gospel, and finds but little room in their religion. I think it necessary, therefore, to prove, that the gospel of Christ is such a doctrine as I have described; and that I shall do by these five reasons:

SECTION II.

I. This doctrine, which I have now mentioned, of the restoration of believers in Jesus Christ to the favour of God, by the atoning sacrifice and obedience of Christ, and the renewing of sinful men to God's image by the work of the Holy Spirit, and thereby bringing them to eternal life, is the very gospel of Christ, because "it is the very labour and business, the chief scope, aim and design of the great apostle of the gentiles, in those of his epistles where he sets himself, professedly, to explain the gospel; and this is what he takes frequent occasion also to bring into all his writings." It is his perpetual labour to instruct the Jews and gentiles in these glorious and unknown truths: He uses various forms of speech to explain them to their understandings; for "I desire, saith he, and *determine to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, that is, nothing like it; nothing in comparison with it. 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. It is the cross of Christ, that is and must be the great subject of my ministry; this is what I am sent to preach, for *it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God;* 1 Cor. i. 24. for the salvation of men; *Rom.* i. 16.

You find his letters to the churches full of such expressions as these, *Christ died for our sins;* 1 Cor. xv. 3. *He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity;* Tit. ii. 13. *We have redemption through his blood;* Eph. i. 7. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;* 2 Cor. v. 19. *He was made sin* verse 21. and *a curse for us;* Gal. iii. 10. *He is our propitiation and atonement;* 1 John ii. 2. *He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;* Heb. ix. 26. *When we*

were enemies we were reconciled to God by his death; Rom. v. 8. *He made peace by the blood of his cross;* Col. i. 20. *He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;* Rom. iv. 25. *By the righteousness of one man the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous;* Rom v. 18, 19. and we are justified by faith in him; *verse* 1. He teaches us also the offices of the Holy Spirit. *We have access to God through his Spirit;* Eph. ii. 18. We are purified and sanctified by the Spirit; 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. It is by the *Spirit* of Christ that we are *to mortify the deeds of the flesh;* Rom. viii. 13—17. *We are led by the Spirit;* and we are taught to understand this gospel *by the Spirit which he hath given us;* Eph. iii. 16. *We are sealed* by this Spirit *unto the day of redemption;* chapter iv. 23. The Spirit dwelling in us is a pledge and *earnest of our inheritance* in heaven, *chapter* i. 14.

Now these expressions of his are to be understood in the common sense and meaning of the words, and not as far-fetched metaphors; for it is evident, that in all this he does not affect the arts of oratory, nor assume a magnificent air of writing, nor does he raise himself into sublimities of style, nor rove in an enthusiastic way, when he treats of these subjects, but while he is explaining to us these great things of the gospel, he avoids the wisdom of words and oratory, and he talks in a plain rational, and argumentative method to inform the minds of men, and give them the clearest knowledge of the truth.

Surely a person, that was sent of God to preach and write the gospel, for the use of all nations and future ages, and even for the ignorant and uninstructed barbarians, would not have expressed himself in this sort of language, if he meant no more by it than the socinians do by the gospel of Christ; that is, "that the Lord Jesus Christ was a very great man, but a mere man still; he was a prophet ordained of God, to preach up holiness in greater degrees than it had been before preached, to settle some points which were left a little doubtful by the light of nature, to assure us that God would be reconciled to man, and forgive him, if man repented and was sorry for his sins, and lived as well as he could for time to come; and that for the sake of the prayers of Christ, who was so very pious, so very religious, and so very heavenly a person, and so submissive in his sufferings to the will of God, he would favour the penitent among mankind with some blessings and comforts in this world, and eternal life in the world above. Then when he had preached this doctrine to the world, he suffered the death of the cross, to bear witness to the truth of it, and sealed it with his blood, and rose again for the confirmation of the same doctrine." Now if this were all the meaning of the gospel of Christ, St. Paul would never have preached it in such language as he did. We must suppose him to be a very inaccurate writer, a most unintelligible preacher and a most unfit man to be made an apostle, and be sent to instruct the ignorant world, if he had expressed himself in such mysterious, figurative, and strange phrases, and all this while had meant no more by them, than what the socinians mean by their gospel.

Can we think God would have employed such an instrument as this was, whose way of talking would have rather deceived multitudes than informed them of the truth, would have led them into the dark rather than have given them light, would have filled their heads with mysterious words without ideas, and instead of leading them into the

way of salvation, would have left them in bewildered thoughts, about the doctrines and duties of it with so much entanglement and confusion?

Here I might add also, that the holy apostle not only instructs his own countrymen the Jews, and the gentile strangers in this divine doctrine, and teaches them to build their hopes of salvation upon it; but he ventures his own soul, his immortal concernments, and his everlasting hopes upon the same foundation. He glories *in the cross of Christ;* Gal. vi. 14. He has committed his all into his hands till the great judgment-day; 2 *Tim.* i. 12. *He lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me,* saith he, *and gave himself for me;* Gal. ii. 20. It is the pleasure of his tongue, it is the joy of his pen, it is the delight and the life of his spirit to talk of those things: He hangs upon this subject, and knows not how to leave it; his very heart and soul is in it, and he abandons all things for the sake of this knowledge. He despises the former privileges of his birth, of his learning, of the jewish prerogatives and rites. He renounces all his legal and ceremonial perfection, and all his honour amongst the priests and the pharisees in comparison of this. *What things were gain to me,* says he, *those I count lost for Christ: Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;* Philip. iii. 7—10.

Nor is the apostle Paul singular in this respect, or different in his sentiments from the other apostles. You find Peter and John saying the same things in their epistles; and they take every occasion to publish the same gospel and the same promises and hopes of salvation by the death and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the enlightening and sanctifying operations of the same Spirit. It would be endless to cite all the proofs of this. Now, it is not to be supposed that the three chief writers among the apostles should all conspire to talk in the same mysterious and unintelligible language, so widely different from the common and obvious sense and meaning of their words, if they intended no more by them, than the socinians mean by their gospel, which is very little different from the way of salvation that the deist proposes, while they deny the satisfaction of Christ, and his real and proper atonement for sin, and the powerful sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

II. As this gospel of Christ which we have described, was the labour of the apostle's ministry, and the design of the revelation of the New Testament, so it is this gospel which is often hinted and prophesied in the Old Testament also, and typified by the ceremonies of the jewish religion. Now these prophecies could not have been fulfilled, nor these types answered and accomplished, without such a gospel as I have explained. The prophecies of the Old Testament are various and many: Some of the clearest of those which relate to the sufferings and atonement of Christ, and to our justification by him, are expressed by Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. By Daniel we are told, that the *Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself,* and the design of this is to *finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquities, and to bring in everlasting righteousness;* Dan. ix. 24, 26. Isaiah speaks the same thing more largely, *Christ was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The*

chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. We like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief, and to *make his soul an offering for sin.* By the knowledge of him shall he justify many, *for he shall bear their iniquities.* How exceeding plain and strong is this language to support this doctrine? Isaiah liii. 5, 6, 10, 11. *In the Lord shall we have righteousness and strength: In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory;* Isaiah xlv. 24, 25. And the prophet Jeremy expressly calls *Christ the Lord our righteousness;* Jer. xxiii. 6.

The promise of sanctification by the Spirit of God, is given us in Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall be my people and I will be your God.* This sort of language is repeated *chapter* xi. 19. and *Jer.* xxxii. 39, 40. *Jer.* xxxi. 31—34. which is cited by the apostle Paul in his epistles to the Hebrews, and to the Corinthians, as the language of the gospel, or the new covenant. Now it is manifest enough, that all these expressions of glorious grace, and of the method of our reconciliation to God, our sanctification and salvation could never be answered and accomplished without such a gospel of Christ as we have described.

The rites and ceremonies of the jewish church speak the same thing, if we consider them as types and figures of the gospel-state. I will grant, indeed, that many of those ceremonies had also some other intendments, *viz.* to distinguish the nation of Israel and their religion, from the gentile world, and the fantastical inventions of pagan worship: To keep them in subjection to God as their political head or king: Several of their sacrifices and methods of purification, were appointed to cleanse them from ceremonial defilements, and to atone for civil or political crimes, whereby they were admitted to their civil rights again, and their place in the congregation, when they had done any thing to forfeit them.

But, it is evident, by the writings of the apostle Paul, in 2 *Cor.* chap. iii. *Gal.* chap. iv. *Col.* chap. ii. *Heb.* vii, viii, ix, x. that the great end of these jewish ceremonial appointments, was to stand as types and figures of things under the gospel, and emblems of the various offices and benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, in this figurative or emblematical sense, what did all the sacrifices and the blood mean, the burning beasts and the smoking altars whereby the Jews made a typical atonement for their sins? What were they types of, what did they represent, if not the sasrifice of Christ? And what means the sprinkling all the people with the blood of animals, if these things did not typify and represent our being cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is therefore called *the blood of sprinkling,* and which is the only real and substantial atonement for sin? What meant their laying the hand upon the goat that was to bear their iniquities, and the confession of the sins of all Israel over his head, if they did not design to foretel the transferring of the sins of men upon the head of our Lord Jesus Christ, the surety and the sacrifice for sinners? What did the washings of water imply, but the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon sinful men, and the purification of their natures by divine grace? Why did that glorious and divine light dwell in the tabernacle and in the temple, and between the cherubims in the holy of holies, if it were not an emblem of the "fulness of the godhead dwelling bodily in the man Christ Jesus," in and by whom God was to converse visibly with the children of men? Can any man be

so absurd as to believe, in opposition to so many expressions of the apostle in his letters, that these sprinklings of water and of blood, these bleeding lambs, and burning goats and bullocks, these veils, curtains and tabernacles, served for nothing else but to wrap up the duties of the light of nature in them, and to explain, or rather to darken, the common truths of natural religion? And yet the apostle tells us in several places, that these were types or figures of the gospel of Christ. Surely every shadow bore the shape and figure of the substance: Every veil and covering was fitted to the body. All these were but shadows, but Christ is the substance or the body, and the shape of the body appeared therein to those that had divine light to discern it, especially to us, whom St. Paul has taught to understand many of these mysteries.

Those therefore who impoverish the gospel of Christ, as some writers have done, and deny those glorious doctrines that are included in it, they deny that gospel which was foretold by the prophets, that gospel which was hidden in the jewish shadows, and they refuse to see it, though it be now broken forth into open light.

III. The gospel of Christ must needs be such a doctrine as we have before described, it must needs be so far superior to all the dictates of the light of nature, and to deserve those glorious characters which the apostle frequently gives it, *viz.* that it is *the wisdom of God in a mystery;* 1 Cor. ii. 7. The *great mystery of godliness;* 1 Tim. iii. 16. A mystery *hidden from ages* and generations; *Col.* i. 26. The mystery *which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men;* Eph. iii. 3, 5. The mystery *that was kept secret since the world began;* Rom. xvi. 25. —hidden in God himself; *Eph.* iii. 9. And is *hid from the wise and prudent* of this world; *Matt.* xi. 25. It is made up of the deep things of God; 1 *Cor.* ii. 10. And derived from the depths of his wisdom and knowledge; *Rom.* xi. 33. It is *the manifold wisdom of God,* which was *made known to principalities and powers* by the church; *Eph.* iii. 10. Which things the angels desire to pry into; 1 *Pet.* i. 12. In this he hath *abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;* Eph. i. 8. And it contains *the unsearchable riches of Christ;* Eph. iii. 8. And *treasures of wisdom and knowledge;* Col. ii. 3.

Now such sort of descriptions as these are very applicable to the doctrine of the Son of God, who is also one with the Father, and who is *God blessed for evermore,* coming down to join himself to flesh and blood that he might be able to die in the room and stead of sinful men, and that this glorious person, *by whom the worlds were made,* and all the hosts of men and angels; *Col.* i. 15. that he should be made a sacrifice for our sins, that God might declare his unspotted holiness, or righteousness, his terrible justice, and his unchangeable hatred of sin, even while he forgives sinners, and justifies those that believe in Jesus; *Rom.* iii. 24, 25. and that this Lord Jesus in human nature should rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, be exalted to the government of *all things visible and invisible; Eph.* i. 22, 23. should send his Spirit down to work faith, repentance and holiness in all his chosen and redeemed ones, and carry them through a thousand temptations and difficulties, and through death itself, to heaven and glory. This is the doctrine that human reason could never have found out, and has much ado to be persuaded to receive it now it is manifested, in the New Testament. These are wonders of unsearchable wisdom, and an entertainment for prying angels.

But if the gospel of Christ signify no more than the mere promise of pardon to those that repent of their sins, and believe Jesus Christ to be a true prophet, and follow the example and commands of Christ, who has explained and confirmed the light of nature,

what is there in this that deserves such a catalogue of glorious titles as the apostle bestows upon this gospel? There is no such great and deep contrivance, such astonishing wisdom in such a covenant of grace, as does nothing else but abate the severe and rigid terms of the covenant of works, and make repentance and imperfect obedience to serve instead of perfect obedience, in order to obtain pardon and happiness.

I confess there was need of some divine revelation to assure us that God would accept of our repentance, and our honest endeavours, when in his law he demands perfection. But this any common prophet might have done, being sent of God and supported by miracles, as Elijah and Elisha were. And when once this doctrine was thus plainly revealed, there would be no great difficulty to persuade men to receive it, there are no such sublime mysteries and depths of wisdom and knowledge contained in it; nor does it need any extraordinary genius, much less divine wisdom itself, to have been the inventor of it. But far be it from us to have such a diminishing thought of the glorious gospel of Christ.

IV. Another reason that I shall give to prove, that the gospel of Christ is such a doctrine as I have before described, is the opinion both of the Jews and gentiles concerning it, and the treatment that it met with both in Judea and amongst the nations. It was counted *foolishness by the Greeks*, or the learned heathens, and it was *a stone of stumbling to the Jews. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness;* 1 Cor. i. 23. Whereas if the doctrine of Christ crucified had implied no more in it than this, that Jesus by his death and martyrdom on the cross, bore a testimony to the truth of the doctrine which he preached, and that doctrine was nothing else but a discovery of God's readiness to accept of sinners that repented and obeyed him, as well as they could, out of his mere mercy; the Jews could never have been so much shocked or offended at it, for they believed as much as this long before St. Paul ever preached: Nor could the learned Greeks have counted that doctrine folly which the wisest of their philosophers seemed to understand and teach. This sort of gospel would have been so little different from what the light of nature might lead them probably to expect and hope for, that surely they would not have endeavoured to expose it and ridicule it, but rather they would have fallen in with St. Paul's sermons, as being agreeable to many of their sentiments. That gospel, therefore, which both the Jews and the Greeks were so much offended with, that they reproached it as madness and folly, must be something strange to their ears, and exceedingly different from their own opinions.

V. I may add also at last, that if St. Paul had meant no more, by the gospel of Christ, than this, that God was willing to be reconciled to mankind, if they would repent of their sins, and be sorry for them, and lived as well as they could for time to come, there had been very little reason for him to speak of his courage in preaching it so often as he does, and that with such an emphasis; *Rom.* i. 16. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation;* and he repeats it again; 2 *Tim.* i. 12. and encourages young Timothy to preach the same gospel, with boldness, and not be ashamed of Christ, nor his ministers. He counts it a great thing, that he could *glory in the cross of Christ;* Gal. vi. 14. and in his doctrine of Christ crucified, and is resolved to spread the savour of it round the world. *I am not ashamed of this gospel,* I am ready to preach it among the Jews or the barbarians, or in the city of Rome itself; *Rom.* i. 15. Now if he had preached nothing but the socinian gospel, there was nothing in it that would

have exposed him to much shame and reproach for the hopes of forgiveness, upon mere repentance; and the enforcement of duties of natural religion, with a little illustration and advance upon them, was much like the gospel or doctrine of the wisest of the heathen philosophers, that he had almost been esteemed one of those wise men, and rather treated with honour amongst them at Athens, and in other gentile cities, and not been reproached as *a setter forth of strange gods*, and called a babbler for his preaching of such sort of doctrines; *Acts* xvii. 18.

But when the apostle preaches the Son of God in the likeness of man, that came down from heaven, not to set up a throne in the world, and rule personally over the nations, but to be exposed to shame and pain, to be nailed to a cross, and have a crown of thorns put upon him, and endure all these sufferings for the sins of mankind: When he tells the heathen world of a man that was hanged upon a tree at Jerusalem, and assures them, that his death is the foundation and spring of eternal life, to all that believe on him; when he preaches, that the *Lord of glory was crucified;* 1 Cor. ii. 8. that so the worst sort of sinners might be saved, and *that he who knew no sin* was made a sacrifice for our sins, that we might stand righteous in the sight of God through his righteousness; 2 *Cor.* v. 21. This was something that sounded so strange in the ears of the heathens, and the blinded Jews too, that they multiplied reproaches upon the sermons and the preacher. And St. Paul thought it a considerable point gained, when he could assume such a degree of courage as to be able to say, I dare preach amongst the gentiles, the Jews, the pharisees and the philosophers at Jerusalem, and at Rome such a gospel as this is; *for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.* This is an argument which, in my opinion, carries much evidence with it, that the gospel of Christ is such a doctrine as I have before described.

But here a considerable objection arises against this description of the gospel. How can the atonement for sin, by the death of Christ be so considerable a part of the gospel, when Christ himself, the great prophet of his church spoke so seldom and so very little of it, during the whole course of his ministry. Surely one would think so important a part of the christian doctrine should not have been neglected by Christ himself.*

SECTION III.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

Though there be a very large and particular answer given to all the parts of this objection in those sermons; particularly, sermon the thirty-fifth, yet since it seems to carry some considerable force in it, I would mention some hints of reply in this place.

Answer I. The great design of our Saviour, in his public apearance and ministry on earth, was to prove himself to wear the true characters of the Messiah, to deliver the Jews from many false expositions and glosses, which the scribes and pharisees of that day had given to several parts of scripture, to lead the world to a conviction of their sins, and thereby prepare them to receive the doctrine of salvation with more zeal and desire; whereas the salvation itself, and the manner whereby it was accomplished, was

* See a large and full answer to this objection in "the Sermon on the Atonement of Christ." Vol. I. page 377.

but briefly mentioned in some few texts, and the rest was left to be explained by his apostles.

Answer II. The doctrine of Christ's atonement for sin is, indeed, intimated in several places of his own ministrations, viz. *Matt.* xx. 28. *The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many;* John x. 15. *I lay down my life for the sheep;* John vi. 51. *The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* And when he instituted the holy supper; *Luke* xxii. 19. He took bread and brake it, saying, *this is my body which is given for you.* And as in St. Matthew's gospel; xxvi. 28. *This cup is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Answer III. This doctrine of atonement for sin by his death, as a sacrifice, and the acceptance of it with God the Father, could not be so well preached in public, before those very facts were fulfilled, upon which this doctrine is founded; for his death was the foundation of this atonement; his resurrection and ascension to heaven, were the proofs of its being accepted with God: Now it might have appeared preposterous to our Saviour, who was divinely wise, to preach these doctrines freely in public to the multitude, before these events appeared in the world. And even to his own disciples he was not too free in the communication of them, because, as *John* xvi. 12. He told them, he had *many things* to teach them, but they *could not bear them yet.* It might have been the means of raising some prejudices in the minds of his own disciples; whereas he reserved some of these things to be taught in those forty days, while he continued with them after his resurrection, and *spake with them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;* Acts i. 3.

And thence we may infer, that if we would learn the plainest and fullest account of the gospel of Christ, it is not enough for us to consult, merely, his public sermons, or the histories of his life, which are called the four gospels, but we must read carefully the writings of the apostles, after he went to heaven; in which they taught these doctrines more completely, which they had learned from the converse of Christ, after his resurrection, as well as by the pouring out of his own Spirit upon them in great abundance, as he had promised.

But there is another objection, which is borrowed from the socinian writings, which it may be proper to give some reply to, *viz.* "That it does not agree to the moral perfections of God to punish sin in a surety; nor does it become the great God, who is a being of infinite wisdom and goodness and equity, to appoint such a way of salvation for men," as would necessitate an innocent creature to be exposed to so many sharp sufferings as Christ underwent, while the guilty sinners suffers nothing of all these terrors, but is delivered from the severest of them by the death of Christ. In answer to this.

Answer I. I desire it may be considered, that this doctrine of the expiation and atonement for sin by Christ, is so plainly and expressly revealed and declared in the New Testament, by the apostles Paul, Peter, and John, as has been already shewn, and is so frequently repeated in many forms of speech in the sacred writings, that it seems a very bold imagination to suppose, that that could not be agreeable to the moral perfections of God, or that it could not become God to appoint that, which in so many repeated scriptures, is expressly asserted to be done by Jesus Christ, and by the appointment of the Father. Can it be ever imagined, that the great God did not know what

would become every one of his perfections better than we little insects, just crept out of the earth, and returning thither again, could teach him? Can it be ever thought, that the eternal mind did not know what was decent for a just and a wise God to do, better than we can conceive or suggest?

I answer, in the second place, that some of the very expressions wherein this doctrine is represented in scripture, are such as seem to be designed on purpose to obviate this very objection, particularly 2 *Cor.* v. 21. God *has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, that is, he made him to be a sacrifice for sin for us, that we might be delivered from the guilt of sin, and accepted as righteous in the sight of God. Again, 1 *Pet.* iii. 18. *Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* Again, 1 *Pet.* ii. 21, 22. Christ suffered for us, *who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* Again, 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. *Jesus Christ the righteous: He is the propitiation for our sins.* Thus you see all these texts declare expressly the innocence of Jesus Christ who suffered, and the iniquities of those for whom he suffered: It is evident enough, that a righteous person died for the guilty, and the guilty were saved.

Answer III. Let it be yet further considered, that the man Christ Jesus, who had a natural will which was distinct from the supreme will of the god-head, gave up himself to those sufferings and consented to it fully; *Heb.* x. 5—10. *In burnt-offerings and sacrifices of* beasts *thou hadst no pleasure; but a body hast thou prepared me:* Then I said, *lo I come to do thy will, O God.* He had a right given him by the Father to lay down his life, and a right to take it up again: *John* x. 18. And he had an additional exaltation promised him on this account; *Heb.* xii. 2. and actually bestowed on him for this service; *Phil.* ii. 9. *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him*, besides several other events in the divine scheme of God's government, for the glory of God, and the happiness of men. All which are sufficient to make the sufferings of Christ very consistent with the equity and justice of God, though the innocent creature suffered and the guilty was set free. So that I see no manner of inconsistency between this transaction, and any of God's moral perfections; and therefore I can see nothing in it which was unbecoming for God to appoint, or for Christ to submit to.

To confirm this, let it be remembered, that it is expressly said, *Heb.* ii. 10. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings,* τελειῶσαι, which signifies to consecrate Jesus Christ to be a high-priest by this blood of atonement, which Doctor Whitby proves at large in his Comment on this Text. Nor is it at all strange, that those who borrow from the socinian* writers may raise such objections against the atonement or satisfaction of Christ for sin: Since Socinus himself, saith, " should there be found

* At the time when this essay was written, it was the common custom of writers to denominate parties of men, by the name which belonged to one of the chief leaders of that party, as Doctor Whitby speaks of the socinians the arians, and others, in the same manner. This practice is not quite so customary now a-days, because the same errors are not always joined in the same person, and therefore it may be proper to describe opinions, errors or parties in general by such names, but not particular persons. As for instance: The socinians in the last age, generally believed Christ to be a mere man, and denied his satisfaction or proper atonement for sin; whereas in the present age, most followers of that party, believe Jesus Christ to be as glorious a person, as the Arians make him, *viz.* more ancient than any of the works of God, and his agent in creating the world, and at the same time they deny his proper atonement for sin.

some places of scripture, where it should be expressly written, that God was made man, or did assume human flesh; they should not presently be taken according as the words sound, since that is altogether repugnant to the divine Majesty." So Socinus in his Disputations of Jesus Christ, And again: "If not once only, but often it should be written in the sacred scriptures, that Christ made satisfaction to God for sins; I would not therefore believe, that the matter is so as you imagine." So Socinus on the Satisfaction. And again: "Any, even the greatest force is to be used with words, rather than take them in the obvious sense." So his Second Epistle to Balcerimicius.

You see then a plain reason, why errors may have the names of their leaders applied to them; but it is not proper to give the same denomination to all those particular persons who hold some of their errors, but who deny the others.

ESSAY II.

THE FORM OF THE GOSPEL.

AN ENQUIRY, "WHETHER IT BE A NEW LAW WITH COMMANDS THREATENINGS AND CONDITIONS IN IT? AND, WHETHER THE DUTIES OF THE GOSPEL ARE OUR JUSTIFYING RIGHTEOUSNESS?"

A Reconciling Discourse.

SECTION I.

IS THE GOSPEL A CONDITIONAL PROMISE.

THE general nature and substance of the gospel is agreed on all hands to be a discovery of divine grace to sinful man through a Mediator: But several parties of christians have raised endless doubts about the particular form of it *viz.* whether it be a mere absolute promise, or a conditional covenant: Whether it contain in it commands and threatenings or no: Or whether it be a new law.

It is my opinion concerning many of the debates about our religion, that they may be sufficiently determined for the peace and practice of christians, by finding out the various use of words in common language, and especially the sense of them in the holy scriptures, and submitting our judgments and consciences to this sense of them with a little reconciling explication. And this noisy controversy, may, perhaps, come nearer to a decision, if we will but honestly consult the ways of speaking, that the scripture useth in solving these three following questions:

But before I propose them, I would beg one favour of my readers, and that is, as they run over these pages, they would so far deny themselves of a common custom, as not to examine and judge of this little essay, by any systems of orthodoxy in their closet, or in their head, but by the only system, out of which I have drawn it, the Holy Bible; for in the whole composure of this discourse I have not consulted one author besides; and I would choose to be read just in the same way in which I write, and to be judged by the same rule. I proceed now to name the three following questions.

Question I. Whether the gospel be an absolute or a conditional promise?

Answer. The gospel, in its most general sense, may be described as a declaration of the free mercy of God, for the salvation of fallen man by a Mediator. As man by his fall hath lost the image of God and his favour; salvation includes the recovery of both these: It implies therefore repentance, regeneration, holiness and perseverance, as well as justification, adoption and glorification; we must be saved from our sins, as well as from the wrath of God, if we are made truly happy. Jesus the Mediator, *saves his people from their sins;* Matt. i. 21. as well as delivers *from the wrath to come;* 1 Thess. i. 10.

These several blessings included in salvation, though they are all bestowed freely by grace, yet have a connexion one with another, and dependance on each other; therefore some of them are represented as foregoing, others as following: some as means,

the others as the end. Faith, repentance, regeneration, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, obedience, the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and perseverance, may all be esteemed as means, with regard to the great and final blessing of glorification, which is the end; and indeed, every foregoing blessing may be reckoned in some sense, as a means with regard to that which follows. Again, some of the blessings included in salvation, are to be wrought in us, as repentance, sanctification, &c. Others to be only bestowed upon us, as pardon of sin, adoption, eternal glory, &c. Those that are to be wrought in us, are sometimes set forth in scripture, as duties to be performed by us, to stir us up in a rational way to seek them; and those that are only to be bestowed upon us, are set forth as blessings to be conferred in consequence upon such duties performed; for God will save us still as intellectual creatures, under a moral government, and will have our rational powers used in obtaining and possessing this salvation; and therefore it is sometimes set forth, as a proposed agreement between two intelligent beings, God and man, and is called *the new covenant, a better covenant, and the word of reconciliation;* Heb. viii. 6, 8. 2 Cor. v. 19.

Upon these considerations the gospel or covenant of grace is sometimes represented as a mere declaration of grace, or an absolute promise in scripture, and sometimes as a conditional one. It is represented absolutely in these texts: *Gal.* iii. 8. *The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed.* Heb. x. 16, 17. *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Though the word covenant does usually signify an engagement on both sides, yet it is sufficiently evident, that in the language of scripture it does not always imply restipulation or mutual agreement; for it is applied to the day and the night, and their stated courses to the beasts of the field, as inhabitants of this earth; *Jer.* xxxiii. 20, 25. *Gen.* ix. 9, 10.

All the blessings of the gospel, both the means and the end, are represented in a way of free or absolute donation by the apostle Paul frequently. So *Eph.* ii. 8, 9. *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works,—for we are his workmanship.*—In other places of scripture, the gospel is represented in a conditional way, as *Mark* xvi. 15, 16. *Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved.* Matt. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* John vii. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* 1 John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*—These are properly called conditional propositions in a logical rational view of the relations of things.

And it may be observed, that those very parts of our salvation, which in one scripture are commanded as duties, in another are promised as blessings. So faith and repentance are duties required. Mark i. 15. *Repent and believe the gospel:* They are blessings bestowed. Phil. i. 29. *To you it is given to believe.* Acts v. 3. *God hath exalted him—to give repentance:* And it is easy to bring instances of the like nature, concerning several other parts of our salvation. Now according to the distinctions I have laid down, the foregoing blessings which are as means, may be esteemed conditions with regard to others, which are as the end of them: So justification and

adoption, as well as faith and repentance, and perseverance, all which are as means, may be called conditions in regard of glorification which is the last end. In that golden chain of salvation, *Rom.* viii. 30. Calling, justification, and glorification are three great links. *Whom he called, them he also justified: And whom he justified, them he also glorified.* But all agree if we are not called we shall not be justified: If we are not justified, we shall not be glorified. Thus every blessing of salvation that, in the necessary order of nature follows another, may be said to be suspended on that other, as a condition without which it shall not be bestowed.

Again, those blessings that are represented as our duties, and are to be wrought in us, may be said to be conditions with regard to consequent blessings that are only conferred upon us: For the word condition, in its most common sense does by no means imply that it must be performed by our own power, nor does it include any thing of a valuable consideration or merit in it, And therefore in this sense, faith may be called a condition of justification, because faith and justification are connected together in scripture, and faith is represented as a foregoing blessing, and as a duty; justification as a consequent blessing, and a privilege which is suspended upon it, Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified.* So the use of water is a condition of being made clean, so coming to the fire is a condition of being warmed, so the putting on a garment is a condition of being clothed, receiving a sealed pardon is the condition of a prisoner's release, committing the body to a physician is the condition of a sick or dying man's being healed: And, in this sense, faith is called a condition of our interest in Christ, by the assembly of divines, in their larger catechism under the question, "How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?"

Answer. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him, and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith with all other saving graces, and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed to salvation.

Nor can I see any sufficient reason why the grace of faith, as a blessing conferred, may be called the condition of a following blessing, and yet faith, considered as a duty, may not be called a condition of the same blessing, since both the habit and the act of faith are the effects of divine grace working in us and by us; and where faith is proposed as a duty, it is represented, more evidently, in a conditional way, than where it is mentioned as a mere blessing. And upon the same account, holiness and perseverance may be called the conditions of our complete salvation in heaven, because holiness and perseverance are foregoing blessings and duties, and complete salvation in heaven is the final privilege; Heb. xii. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;* Matt. xxiv. 13. *He that endures to the end shall be saved.* Nor doth Doctor Owen, nor other moderate writers in this controversy, refuse the use of the word condition in such s sense.

What I have said concerning the various blessings of the gospel or new covenant, may be applied also to the seals or symbols of it, baptism and the Lord's supper. These are seals on God's part, which he hath appointed for the confirmation of our faith, by the help of our senses, and that he might give us, as it were, a real pledge of

the performance of his promises. Thus Abraham *received circumcision a seal of the righteousness of faith;* Rom. iv. 11. Thus we receive baptism as a seal of our regeneration by the Holy Spirit: Thus the Lord's-Supper as a seal of our pardon and life by the crucifixion and death of Christ. But as great privileges as they are, thus granted to us, we must remember they are also duties to be performed by us, and are seals on our part of our engagement to be the Lord's. Nor have we any reason to expect the comforts that arise from these sealed blessings of the gospel, if we wilfully despise and neglect the use of the seals: And, in this sense, they may be called conditions of the privileges, and comforts that are annexed to them.

I desire it here to be noted, that I speak not this to encourage and promote the common use of the word condition in these cases; for it is not used in scripture, except once in a parable; and that not in the original, but only in our translation. The text is *Luke* xiv. 33. where it is not at all to the purpose of the present controversy: The conditions there mentioned are not the conditions of our salvation, but quite another thing: The design of the parable is to shew that those who have not courage to fight with their spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, must even make conditions of peace with them, that is, sit still and neglect Christ and religion. Besides the word condition, though it be an innocent and an useful and expressive word in the matter of duty and privilege, yet it hath been ill explained by some preachers, and worse understood by some hearers, and thereby it hath given great offence: I say this therefore only to shew that there is not so much heresy and poison in those four syllables, as some learned men pretend, and some unlearned believe and fear. If any man will fix such a rigid sense on the word condition, as is inconsistent with the grace of the gospel, and then say the gospel has no conditions in it, I will not contend with him; for he speaks consistently with himself, and with scripture too; because scripture does not use the word: But if condition be taken in a very plain and common sense, for any one thing upon which another is suspended, I do not know any scripture that forbids the use of it but such texts as these, 1 Cor. x. 32. *Give no offence to—the church of God.* Rom. xv. 2. *Please* your *neighbour for his good to edification.*

SECTION II.

Question II. "Is the gospel a new law?—Whether commands and threatenings belong to the gospel?"

Answer. The word gospel or εὐαγγέλιον, though it signifies glad tidings in its original derivation, yet it is used in scripture sometimes in a larger sense, as well as sometimes in a more proper and limited one.

When it is used in its proper and limited sense, it denotes a mere declaration of the good-will of God for the recovery of fallen man: So the texts before cited, *Gal.* iii. 8. *Heb.* x. 16, 17. And so 2 *Cor.* v. 19. where the gospel is called *the word of reconciliation,* the substance of it is, *that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.* So the first gospel that ever was preached to Adam, after the fall, was a free discovery of mercy; Gen. iii. 15. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*

When the word gospel is used in its larger sense, it includes predictions, commands, promises, threatenings, histories, examples, and almost whatever is necessary to enforce

those duties upon the consciences of men, which are as means appointed, in order to partake of the privileges.

So the gospel contains in it narratives of matters of fact, or histories; Mark i. 1. *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ*, which seems to refer to all the following history of his life and death; and the four histories of the evangelists are called gospels, which title, if not divine originally, yet, has been the language of the church, through so many ages of christianity.

The word gospel contains, also, some doctrines; *Col.* i. 5. *The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel.* The gospel reveals truths before unknown to men. So *life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.* 2 *Tim.* i. 10. that is, doctrines of the heavenly state.

Commands. 2 *Cor.* ix. 13. *By the experiment of this ministration they glorified God for your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ.* This subjection to the gospel, implies, that liberality is commanded in it. *Acts* xvi 21. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* This is the command given to the convinced jailor.

Promises and threatenings. *Mark* xvi. 15, 16.—*Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Predictions, particularly of the final judgment. *Rom.* ii. 16. *God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.* That is, according as I have preached.

It is plain, that sometimes the gospel is said to be the object of belief; as *Mark* i. 15. *Believe the gospel*; and there it signifies a declaration of grace to sinners. Sometimes it is said to be the object of obedience. *Rom.* x. 16. *All have not obeyed the gospel;* there it must include duties and commands. It is also evident, that in many places of the New Testament the gospel is used to signify the whole ministry of the apostles, and all the subjects of their preaching, as *Rom.* i. 9. *Whom I serve in the gospel.* 1 Cor. ix. 14. *They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel: viz.* be maintained, not merely for preaching a promise, but for the whole of their ministration; and therefore the apostle sometimes calls it my gospel, and our gospel, to signify his whole ministry. Nor do I think there is any great difference, whether we include commands, threatenings, &c. in the word gospel, taken in a large sense, or call them appendices and attendants of the gospel, taking the word in a sense more proper and limited: For the language of scripture seems to favour the one as well as the other. But this is the mischief that ariseth between christians, that differ in their sentiments or expression of things, they imagine that while one is true, the other must needs be false; and then they brand each other with error and heresy; whereas if they would but attend to scripture, that would shew them to be both in the right, by its different explication of their own forms of speaking. The gospel hath, or hath not, commands and conditions in it, according to the various senses in which it is used. And, in this way of reconciliation, I cannot but hope for some success, because it falls in with the universal fond esteem that each man hath of his own understanding; it proves that two warm disputers may both have truth on their side: Now if ten persons differ in their sentiments, it is much easier to persuade all of them that they may be all in the right, than it is to convince one that he is in the wrong.

Question. "Whether the gospel be a new law?"

Answer. A law in the proper and full meaning of the word, includes these three things in it:

I. That there be some command given out, wherein some duty is required, or sin forbidden by the just authority of a superior.

II. That there be a sanction, or penalty annexed to the neglect of that duty required, or the commission of that sin forbidden: This sanction is not always expressed, but it is always implied; for the authority, that is sufficient to impose a command on any person, must also be sufficient to punish the breach of this command, and the offender is liable to bear it: otherwise the command would be a mere advice, and not a law.

III. That the performance of this duty or duties required, and abstinence from these sins forbidden, is our proper righteousness, or matter upon which we are justified in the court of this law.

These three things are implied in every strict and proper law: And I might prove it by instances of the chief laws that scripture speaks of, *viz.* the law of innocency, the law of nature, and the jewish law.

Thus it was in the law of innocency, or covenant of works with Adam; the duties required, were all that the light of nature and reason enjoined to Adam in such circumstances, to which there was one positive prohibition added, *Thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge*, &c. and the sanction and penalty is expressed; *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;* Gen. ii. 17. and Adam's observance of this law would have been his righteousness in the sight of God, and justified him before God, according to the general language of this and all laws. *The man that doeth them shall live in them;* Gal. iii. 12. And it is generally agreed, that the tree of life was a symbol or seal of immortal life to Adam, if he obeyed the law.

Thus it was also in the law of nature, or moral law, which is very little different from the law of innocency, and this law is plainly described by the apostle; *Rom.* ii. 12—15. *The work of the law is written in the hearts* of the heathens, that is the general commands and penalties may be found by the light of nature, and "the doers of this law shall be justified." Not that St. Paul means, that any person shall actually be justified by his doing, but that this is the way of justification, according to the law of nature.

Thus it was, also, in the jewish law, or Sinai covenant, which was not the gospel, but an additional constitution, relating only to the jewish nation, to be governed by God as their peculiar king. And it was really distinct from the covenant of grace or gospel of salvation, whereby Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the Israelites themselves were to be saved. Some persons, indeed, call it a legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, with whom I will not contend, but it is more agreeable to the language of scripture, to call it a distinct covenant, or a covenant or law of works, as a jewish appendix to the gospel.

It is true, indeed, the jewish law had much of grace in it as well as much of terror, and in many parts of it, it represented, typified, witnessed and held forth the gospel or covenant of grace, whereby all believers in all ages are to be saved, as well as the original law of nature, or the general covenant of works, whereby all men are cursed and condemned; and the apostle makes use of it in all these views in his epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews: But the jewish law in its own proper nature and design, was a special or particular covenant of works with temporal promises and temporal threatenings.

The duties enjoined were chiefly contained in the four last books of Moses, and commonly called the moral, the ceremonial, and the judicial or political law; The

sanction is written in many parts of those books; some of the threatenings or penalties were to be inflicted on particular offenders by the magistrate, such as, beating with rods, stoning to death, fines and amercements of money or goods, &c. Some were to be inflicted on the whole nation by God himself, if they transgressed this law, such as, plagues, famine, banishment from the land of Canaan, &c. *Deut.* xxviii. and the justifying righteousness according to this law, was their obedience to the precepts and ordinances of it. *Deut.* vi. 25. *And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.* So *Deut.* xxiv. 13. So *Rom.* x. 5. *Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them.*

Now let us consider how far the gospel partakes of the nature of a law, and may be so called:

I. The gospel, taken in a large sense, hath so much of the nature of a law in it, that there are commands given, duties enjoined, sins forbidden; and it hath a sanction also, for there are terrible penalties annexed to the contempt or rejection of it, even a *much sorer punishment* than was threatened for the breach of the law of Moses; *Heb.* x. 28, 29. And because it partakes so much of the nature of a law, and hath so much resemblance to it, it is in a few places of scripture called a law; without dispute; *Isaiah* ii. 3. *The law shall go forth from Sion.* Rom. iii. 27. *The law of faith.*

II. The gospel is not a law, in the full sense of the word, for it wants the third requisite of a law. Whatsoever duties are required in the gospel, the performance of those duties by us is not described in scripture as the matter of our righteousness before God. There are many blessings promised, and blessednesses pronounced in the gospel upon the discharge of various duties of holiness, which are prescribed in the New Testament; but in the court of God and his word, a sinner is not justified by any or all these duties Faith itself, which is the first and great requirement of the gospel, is not our justifying righteousness, but is the way and means to obtain, or be possessed of a justifying righteousness. The righteousness, by which we are justified under the gospel, doth not use to be represented as a righteousness wrought in us, or by us, or as a righteousness of works, or as a righteousness of man; but it is mentioned as a righteousness from without us, a given righteousness; *Rom.* v. 17. a righteonsness *imputed without works;* Rom. iv. 6. And it is commonly called by St. Paul, *the righteousness of God,* it is a rectitude in the court of God including or inferring an absolution from guilt, and a right to heaven appointed, prepared and bestowed by God himself, upon all them that believe; and it is received by our faith or trusting in Christ. *The righteousness of God* is *by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe;* Rom. iii. 22. And it is called *the gift of righteousness;* in Rom. v. 17. as a very distinct thing from the gift of faith; *Eph.* ii. 8.

And here we may do well to take notice that though there are a great many differences between the gospel, which St. Paul preached, and the jewish law, such as the multitude of arbitrary commands in the natural and civil life, the burden of many ceremonies, the temporal promises and threatenings, &c. yet the grand point of difference, which he frequently insisted on, is the different way of justification, *viz.* That the one is by works, the other not. Always remembering that before God, as the great Lord of conscience, and with regard to eternal life, the Jews were to be justified and saved by the same gospel, and by faith, even as Abraham of old, and christians now.

But with regard to God, considered as their political governor or king by the Sinai covenant, they were to be justified by works. The blessed apostle therefore treating accurately of these matters ever distinguishes the gospel from the law, whether it be the law of nature, the law of innocency, the jewish law, and indeed, from every thing that hath the full nature and form of a law, by this particular mark, *viz.* that our obedience to the law would be our justifying righteousness if we performed it; but obedience to the gospel is not our justifying righteousness. So *Rom.* ii. and iii. chapters*.

The jewish law, considered as a special covenant, or as it includes or represents the general law of nature, says, Peace *to every man that worketh good*, to the Jew and the gentile: and *the doers of the law shall be justified;* Rom. ii. 10, 13. But *the righteousness of God*, that is, that righteousness whereby we are justified according to the gospel, is a *righteousness without the law*, a different thing from a law-righteousness, and is now manifested by the gospel, and comes upon every believer, *Rom.* iii. 21, 27. So *Rom.* x. 5, 6. The righteousness of the law saith, *The man that doeth those things shall live by them:* But the righteousness of faith saith, *verse* 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved;* So *Gal.* iii. 11, 14. *The law is not of faith*, for this very reason, because the law says "Do this and live, or obey and be justified." But the gospel saith, *The just shall live by faith. Believe and thou shalt be saved.* And in the following verses, the gospel is represented under the term and title of a promise to distinguish it more evidently from a law: *For, if there had been a law which could have given life, verily, righteousness should have been by the law;* Gal. iii. 21. *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* This is the common language of scripture.

And therefore instead of representing the several duties enjoined in the gospel, as the matter of our righteousness before God, the New Testament sends us expressly to Jesus Christ for righteousness. So St. Paul tells us; *Rom.* iii. 25. *Christ is set forth as a propitiation* that God might justify them that believe, and yet be a just and righteous God; *Rom.* v. 17, 19. *They that receive the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.* So *by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. By the obedience of one*, that is, Christ, *shall many be made righteous.* God will have a righteousness in his gospel whereby grace shall reign to eternal life; *Rom.* v. 21. though it is not a righteousness of our own works, as the objection in the very next verse, *Rom.* vi. 1. evidently proves, and so *Rom.* x. 3. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe;* 1 Cor. i. 30. Christ is *made of God righteousness to us;* and 2 *Cor.* v. 20, 21. where the gospel is described as *the word of reconciliation*, we are told that Christ *was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, and this righteousness is expressly called *the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ;* 2 Pet. i. 1. because it is the immediate result of his obedience and death. And it is upon this account in the Old Testament, he is more than once called *the Lord our righteousness.* But when I explain in what sense Christ is our righteousness, I would take more time and room, lest if I should not keep exactly to the common forms of expression, I should want a larger vindication.

* See this more enlarged and explained in the "Harmony of all Religions," chapters v. and vi.

Now though our obedience to the first and great command of the gospel, *viz.* Believing in Christ, is not our righteousness, lest it exclude Christ and the righteousness of God, yet it is the way of our partaking of this righteousness; and therefore our justification or justifying righteousness is so often called *the righteousness of God by faith*, and *the righteousness of faith;* ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη. *Rom.* ix. 30. *Rom.* x. 6. δικαιοσύνη διὰ πίστεως, and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει *Phil.* iii. 9. all which are more properly rendered, "The righteousness that is by or through faith," or that comes upon our believing. In other places it is expressed, that we *are justified by faith;* but still in opposition to the works of any true and proper law. And it is in this sense that faith is said to be imputed or accounted for righteousness. *Rom.* iv. 5. it is not said, faith is our righteousness, or instead of a perfect righteousness, but λογίζεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην that is, in order to our justification; meaning, that of all the graces wrought in us, or actions done by us, faith is the only thing that God makes account of, or reckons to our advantage, in order to our justification, or our obtaining a justifying righteousness, and that not as a work or duty performed, as is proved by the context, but chiefly for this very reason, because it renounceth every thing of works, and goes out of self to depend entirely on grace, which is the design of all that fourth *chapter*, by a parallel instance of Abraham's not depending on his own sufficiency of nature, but on God's power to fulfil the promise.

Nor is this exposition of the words εἰς δικαιοσύνην forced or strange, for they are used exactly in the same sense in other places, even when it is joined with πιστεύω, *Rom.* x. 20. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,* that is, in order to his obtaining a justifying righteousness, or in order to justification; so *verse* 4. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.*

This account of things gives a plain reason why the gospel justifies and accepts those persons who perform a honest and sincere, but a very poor, inconstant and imperfect obedience to the commands contained in it, although those duties are there commanded in perfection, *viz.* because it is not our obedience to those commands that is the justifying righteousness of the gospel, but another righteousness that is given us, that is, a freedom from guilt, and a right to life, when we obey the first great command, *viz.* believing or trusting in Christ.

Whereas a proper law requires perfect obedience for justification: The language of every proper law is this; *Cursed*, or condemned, *is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them;* Gal. iii. 10. and *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;* James ii. 10. That can be no justifying righteousness according to a law, which doth not arise to the perfection of the command, both for kind, for degree, for continuance, and for every circumstance. But the gospel proposing another justifying righteousness to be received, only, by our faith, whether this faith be strong and perfect or no, yet, if it be true, it receives the righteousness, and the believer is justified. If a criminal lay hold on a pardon with a trembling paralytic hand, he is as safe from condemnation, as he that with courage and strength reaches out his arm to seize it; because it is not his hand, but the pardon secures him. If an Israelite stung by a fiery serpent could but just look with half an eye to the brazen serpent, he was healed, as well as another that beheld it with strong and steady eyes; *Num.* xxi. 8, 9. If the manslayer was never so lame and feeble, yet if he could but reach the city of refuge, he was as secure from the avenger, as he that fled to it with the swiftest feet; *Num.* xxxv. 12. So he that commits his

guilty sinful soul to Christ for salvation, though with a feeble faith, and far short of perfection, yet a righteousness is given him; *the righteousness of God is unto and upon all that believe, for there is no difference;* Rom. iii. 22. and a weak believer is as secure from hell as a stronger, though he cannot have so much present evidence or comfort: And the reason of his safety is, because his believing is not his justifying righteousness, but is only a means to attain it.

This is my present best set of thoughts upon this subject; and though I have copied them all from the word of God, so far as I have been able to understand the meaning of it, yet some subtile disputer may arise and tell me, he could embarrass my scheme with so many objections, and press it with such powerful difficulties, as are far above my skill to solve, and so constrain me to renounce it.

If this disputer can shew me that any part of it is contrary to scripture, I renounce it freely; but though he might perplex it with difficulties, which I could not easily answer, yet I would not merely for that reason be bound immediately to renounce it: For there are many texts of scripture itself which are so embarrassed and perplexed by the cavilling wit of the deists or socinians, that it may be exceeding hard to give a fair and satisfactory account of them; yet none of us, who are christians, dare to renounce the scripture, nor those very texts, that have so much darkness about them; because we have so much stronger proof of the truth of scripture. How many difficulties are there in the chronological and historical parts, that seem scarce reconcileable by all the learning and reason of men; and perhaps that Spirit only can reconcile them who knows what were his own designs in writing, what the idea that the first writers fixed to each word, what the sense which they intended to convey to the first readers, and what accidental variations may have crept into the text by the ignorance or negligence, the bigotry or sacrilege of the transcribers. I have learned from my youngest years of philosophy, not to renounce any proposition, for which I see plain and sufficient evidence, from reason and revelation, though many difficulties may attend it, which I am not at present able to solve. I know the weakness of human nature.

SECTION III.

Yet that I may make a clearer way for this discourse, to the assent of my readers, I would give a hint or two how the chief objections that I can think of, may be removed:

Objection I. Some may oppose me by scripture, and say, Among all the texts that call the gospel a law, there is one that makes our blessedness evidently to depend on our doing the work commanded therein. James i. 25. *Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* Now this looks like justification by obedience to the commands of the gospel, which is the proper nature of a law.

Answer I. That the gospel, which hath advices, commands and threatenings belonging to it, should be sometimes called a law in scripture is no wonder, for the word law among the Jews, was in so frequent use upon all occasions, that not only doctrines, rules and constitutions were called laws, but even the natural and supernatural principles of human actions. So *the law of kindness;* Prov. xxxi. 26. for good humour, or a prin-

ciple of love and civility. So *the law of sin;* Rom. vii. 25. for the principles of corrupt nature and evil inclinations. So *the law of the Spirit of life,* for a principle of holiness; *Rom.* viii. 2. And yet if all the places where some suppose the gospel to be called a law, were well examined, we should find them reduced to a very few in reality: Whence it will appear that this is not the common language of scripture. The text cited in the objection seems rather to refer to the moral law, which is called *a law of liberty,* because it is freed from its cursing and condemning power by the gospel, and made easy to believers by their new nature: Now, surely, no christian will say that we are to be justified by doing the works of the moral law.

Answer II. In those places of the New Testament where the gospel is, or is supposed to be called a law, there is generally some qualifying word added, as *the law of faith, the law of liberty,* &c. that it may seem to stand in opposition to a law of works, and appear distinct from a strict and proper law.

Answer III. There may be, as I have before hinted, many blessings promised, and blessednesses pronounced upon obedience to any of the commands of God, whether in the moral law or gospel; so *Psalms* i. 1. and cxix. 1, 2. so *Matt.* v. 3—11. But every such blessing doth not signify the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, his release from the guilt or obligation to hell, and his first right to heaven. He that obeys the duties of the law or gospel in any measure or degree, has some sort of blessedness pronounced on him by the favour and condescension of God, for *in keeping* any of *his commands there is great reward;* Psalm xix. 11. especially to a soul in a state of grace, and already justified by faith.

Objection II. Another may draw an argument from reason, and say, Whatsoever duties of righteousness are required in any constitution or covenant, the fulfilling those duties must in the very nature and reason of things be esteemed that righteousness upon which that constitution pronounces a man just or right in court; so faith justifies us against the charge of unbelief, so repentance and sincere obedience justify us against the charge of impenitency and hypocrisy and so perseverance justifies against the charge of apostacy, because it is a conformity to that rule or constitution which requires faith, repentance, preseverance, &c.

Answer. It must be granted, indeed, that in the very nature of things our faith justifies us against the charge of unbelief, so far as our faith goes; and our repentance and our love to God justify us against the charge of impenitence, and hating God, so far as we do repent and love him; and our meekness, humility and sincerity, justify us against the charge of pride and passion, and hypocrisy, so far as we are meek, humble and sincere: And in this sense the apostle John might say; 1 *John* iii. 7. *He that doth righteousness is righteous, as God is righteous;* where righteousness is evidently used for holiness, and not in a forensic sense, to signify justification. But all our virtues and graces of faith, love, repentance, &c. are so very far from perfection, and so much below what the holiness of God and his commands require, that the Spirit of God in his word, hath not thought fit to honour these our works with the name of righteousness, when he is describing the way how a sinner is justified; nor hath he applied the term of justification to these performances in those places of scripture where with a plain design and exactness of expression he hath treated of the righteousness that justifies a sinner before God. And the holy apostle seems cautious of using the word justification, when he is speaking of his own sincere obedience; 1 *Cor.* iv. 4.—*I know nothing by myself, yet am*

I not hereby justified; though this justification refers only to the charge of any negligence in the discharge of his apostolical office.

Objection III. Yet it is evident that there are several texts which speak of our justification by works, as *James* ii. 24. our justification by our words; *Matt.* xii. 37. and our right to heaven by doing the commands; *Rev.* xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city.*

Answer. In those places of scripture where the word justification is used and attributed to our duties or graces, we must consider in what sense justification is taken.

1. There is a justification before men, and a justification in our own consciences; and in both these respects our repentance, our love to God, our good works, all justify us against the charges of wicked men, and against the charges of Satan's temptations, or our own doubting consciences, that is, our repentance shews we are not impenitent, and our good works shew that we are not full of wicked works; and good works may be said to justify us also against the charge of a false and hypocritical dead faith, for they prove that our faith is lively and true; and this is that justification St. James intends, *chapter* ii. for *verse* 18. he says, *I will shew thee my faith by my works;* and it is in this sense that he speaks of justification by works. So *Abraham was justified* from the charge of a dead faith, by his zeal for God in *offering up his Son;* James ii. 21—23. Thus was *the scripture fulfilled,* that is, thus was the truth and honour of the scripture maintained and cleared, which declares Abraham to be justified by faith. Now though this act of Abraham's faith here mentioned, and *Gen.* xv. 6. exercised on the express promise of the Messiah, be not the first act of faith that ever he put forth, and though he might be in a justified state long before, yet every repeated act of true faith confirms the justifying sentence, and shews the way of his first justification: And so every good work he performed may be said, in another sense to confirm his justification too, as it proves the truth of his faith, and evidences him to be justified.

2. There is a justification at the day of judgment, which is only declarative, and designed to publish and declare to all the world the equitableness of God's final sentence, adjudging some to heaven and some to hell: And there our own holiness, imperfect as it is, may justify us against the charge of being utterly wicked; what good words we have spoken, may justify us against the charge of being always guilty of evil or idle words: They serve to distinguish the character of saints and sinners, and to make it appear there is a difference in their practice, as well as in their recompences, as the process of that awful day is represented; *Matt.* xxv. 31—46. And it is in this sense that our Saviour saith concerning the day of judgment; *Matt.* xii. 37. *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;* that is, your words as well as your actions shall have a share in determining your character before men and angels in that day. And that text also in the *Rev.* chap. xxii. 12, 14. refers evidently to the last judgment, where it is said, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be; blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* The sense of it is, that those who persevere to the end, in a sincere obedience to the commands of Christ, in all the duties of holiness, shall have a public, adjudged and declared right to the immediate possession of heaven; which is a very different thing from the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, by his believing or

trusting in Christ, which gives him the first right; and which is the precise subject of St. Paul's discourse, *Rom. chapters* ii. iii. iv. and v. and *Gal. chapters* ii. and iii.

It is on this matter that our divines are wont to make a distinction between the "jus hæreditarium," or the right of heirship which a son has to his father's estate, as soon as he is born, supposing his father to be dead, and the "jus aptitudinarium," which is a right of fitness, and a right to the immediate possession, and this he has not till the age of manhood. Nor is this distinction ill-framed, nor unaptly applied to the present case; for scripture gives a plain foundation for it, *viz.* that we have the right of heirship at our first believing, and the right of actual fitness, when we have fulfilled all the services God hath appointed us in this life. The scriptures that naturally lead to this distinction are these; The right of heirship by faith is very plain; *Rom.* iv. 11, 13, 16. *Gal.* iii. 26, 29. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Nor doth the apostle make much distinction between our right to heaven by justification, and that by adoption or inheritance, for both justification and adoption come by faith; and he intermingles both, as they most fitly answer his present design; which is evident by comparing the process of his discourse from *Rom.* ix. 1—16. and *Rom.* v. 17, 18, 21. And then there is the right of fitness for immediate possession; *Heb.* x. 36. *For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise;* and this is the right intended; *Rev.* xxii. 14. Now we may suppose both the right of heirship and of fitness to be joined in that text; *Heb.* vi. 12. *Who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Through faith they are made heirs at first and through continuance in faith and patience they are become actual inheritors. Nor is that text in *Rom.* x. 10. much unlike, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Here justification is attributed to faith, and salvation to the outward profession of christianity, including all the proper effects and evidences of faith in a holy life. And though salvation in many places of scripture is put for justification, because justification is salvation begun, yet when they are more accurately distinguished, the one is attributed to faith, the other to works, or to faith and works together.

Now, whatever other sorts of justification may be mentioned in scripture, yet this justification of a sinner through faith, requires such a righteousness as must secure us from all the charges and penalties of all the guilt of every sin both original and actual, from all the charges of God's most holy and broken law, from all the charges of the imperfection of our faith, repentance, and our best works, and must set a sinner right and make him righteous, and give him a right to life in the court of that God who justified Abraham and David *without works*, by imputing righteousness to them, and continues under the gospel the same way to justify the ungodly; *Rom.* iv. 5, 6. that is, all that we do in a way of duty or godliness, is not respected in this court, but we are looked upon as ungodly, and without all righteousness in ourselves, and as such have a righteousness, or a right to life bestowed on us, or are justified of mere grace.

And though here and there, for wise purposes, an expression may be dropped occasionally in scripture, that may favour another way of speaking, yet in the descriptions of the gospel, the way of a sinner's justification in the sight of God at his conversion, is never put upon fulfilling of the gospel-duties, as the matter of his justifying righteousness; and therefore the gospel is not a proper law: And whatsoever forms of

speech some persons may fancy agreeable to the nature and reason of things, yet this which I have described is the most common way wherein the penmen of scripture represent those things, when they seem to aim at an accurate and distinct description of the law and gospel: Now scripture is our surest rule of speaking in matters of pure revelation.

To sum up all in short: The word law is taken in various senses in the Bible: In some places it means inward principles of action, as *the law of kindness, the law of sin;* sometimes it signifies only directions and rules of life, as *Prov.* xiii. 14. *The law of the wise,* that is, rule of wisdom. In other places it includes all the orders and injunctions that relate to one subject; as *the law of the Nazarite;* Num. vi. 13. *the law of the burnt-offering;* Lev. vi. 9. Sometimes it is taken in so large a latitude as to take in all doctrines, counsels and advices, commands, promises, threatenings, including prophecies, histories and examples also; so the law frequently signifies all the five books of Moses. And in these senses the gospel in its largest signification has several laws belonging to it, and itself may be called a law. The scripture indulges a sparing use of it in such a sense. But the word law in its most proper and strict sense signifies a constitution where duties are required, which if neglected, subject the offender to a penalty, and if performed, they are his justifying righteousness; and in this sense, scripture doth not at all favour the application of this name to the gospel: For it is abundantly evident, that the words law and gospel, taken in their most proper and limited senses, are constantly distinguished from each other, and set in direct opposition in the New Testament.

Thus have I thrown into some order those few, plain, reconciling thoughts between the contending parties of christians, and am already almost in pain to think that I shall a little displease all parties, because all these thoughts will hardly square and adjust themselves exactly to any of the popular and settled schemes of orthodoxy; or at least, they will never agree with the extremes on either hand: Yet if they appear to be drawn merely from the scripture, and to speak the language of the holy writers, then this discourse will approve itself to those who maintain the most sacred regard to the Bible; and those schemes should be a little moulded and bent, to adjust them to the language of scripture, even when it uses different forms of speech. But I shall not enter farther into this controversy, because my design is to soften the angry tempers of men, that they may not rage against each other when they use different forms of speaking, as the scripture itself does, and make an apology for both sides, while they agree in the things that are most substantial and necessary.

SECTION IV.

RECONCILING SENTIMENTS.

Now that I may proceed in this reconciling work, I shall follow this method:

I. Represent the different apprehensions and different language of men in preaching the gospel.

II. Mention some of the causes or occasions of these different apprehensions.

III. Give a hint or two of the conveniences and inconveniences of each of these ways of preaching.

IV. Shew the safety and sufficiency of each, with regard to salvation.

V. Conclude with a word or two of request or humble advice.

I. Let me represent the various apprehensions of men in those matters: But here I would be understood to describe only the moderate men among those who are called calvinists, and those that are named new-methodists; as for the high-flyers, or extreme and rigid party-men of either side, I leave them out in my present account, while I mention the little differences among the men of moderation, among whom I reckon far the greatest part of the protestant dissenters in England, to be at this time, and I hope I am not mistaken in this opinion.

Some when they read or pronounce the words law or gospel, take them generally in their loosest and largest sense, and so they unite their names, and make them consistent together; others are ready to take those words in their limited and proper sense, and then they divide them into very distinct things, and will not allow their names so promiscuous a use.

Some ministers love to explain the gospel in a more legal way, and describe it as a conditional covenant that requires agreements and restipulations from men; they insist much on vowing and resolving to submit to the commands of Christ, and with a lively zeal and powerful eloquence, they enforce the duties of repentance, sincere obedience, watchfulness and perseverance; and shew how much the promises of life, heaven and glory, peace and daily pardon depend on these qualifications and performances, pronouncing the terrible threatenings of damnation on the impenitent, the unbelieving, and the disobedient, to awaken the secure sinner, and stir up the slothful christian. Others delight more in representing the gospel as a declaration of grace and free promise of salvation to sinners; a promise of pardoning mercy, sanctifying grace, and everlasting glory to sinful and perishing criminals, and invite sinners to receive all this grace, to accept of this salvation, and to trust in this Saviour, according to the offers of the gospel: When its truths are revealed, the first sort choose to say, that the moral law of nature in the hand of Christ, commands us to believe them; when its duties are mentioned, they rather say, the law of nature in the hand of Christ requires obedience to them; and that while the gospel in its proper language promises salvation to believers, the moral law, or law of nature, binds condemnation on the unbeliever, and the impenitent; but the pure gospel is all grace and mercy: And they preach the law of works in the perfection of its demands and terror of its penalties, to drive sinners for refuge to the gospel: And they press the duties of holiness on their hearers from a comfortable sense of their deliverance from hell, and from gratitude to Christ, as evidences of their faith, as preparatives for heaven, and as necessary, both in the nature of things, and by divine appointment, in order to our final happiness.

Those that follow the conditional way of preaching the gospel, describe the chief act of faith, as a consent of will to submit themselves to him in all his offices; a consent to take him for their *Prophet*, and resolution to make all his instructions their rule and guide; a consent to take him for their *Priest*, to make their peace with God, and obtain their pardon; a consent to own him for their *King*, and promise sincere obedience to him as their *Lord*, in all his commands; but still with a humble dependence on his Spirit and grace, to enable them to fulfil these resolutions.

Those that preach the gospel in its more free and absolute form, describe faith in Christ as the flight of a poor, guilty, perishing sinner to an only refuge; and they make

its chief act to consist in a trusting or committing the soul, ignorant, guilty, hard-hearted and sinful as it is, into the hand of Christ, with a sincere desire to have it enlightened by him as their *Prophet*, pardoned and reconciled to God through him as their *Priest*, and subdued to all willing obedience to him, and by him, as their *Lord* and *King*; humbly expecting that he will do all this for them; and this is, in their opinion, the best way of addressing themselves to poor sinners, who find themselves so dark, so sinful, so feeble and inconstant in their best obedience and purposes, that they dare not resolve upon any thing, and can hardly say, they heartily vow and promise a submission to Christ in all things; but that they can better apply to him in a way of trust and dependence, humbly desiring and hoping he will work all this in them by his free grace, while they wait upon him in his appointed means.

The one are ever persuading their hearers to bind their souls to God, by solemn vows and covenants, even in particular duties, believing this to be the most effectual way to guard against every sin, and best secure their obedience and constancy under every temptation: The other are afraid to urge so much, vowing and resolving on the consciences of men, lest they thereby lead them into a legal frame, under a spirit of bondage, and lest their consciences be more troublesomely entangled and ensnared after every broken vow, and their faith and hope be too much discouraged; that faith and hope which ought to be the constant springs of their obedience. They advise their people, therefore, rather *to commit their souls* afresh continually to the care of Christ, as 2 *Tim.* i. 12. to believe he accepts them, and to walk watchfully, without any particular, formal, and explicit vows. Though it must be confessed, that with regard to christians of different tempers and temptations both these methods have had very good success.

Some are *sons of thunder*, "*Boanerges*," and frighten the profane out of their security, by many terrors that are written against those who obey not the gospel; and they enforce obedience on the consciences of believers, chiefly by way of rewards and punishments: The other are like *Barnabas's sons of consolation*, and persuade sinners to accept of the offered grace, by all the allurements of the compassion of God, and by the dying love of a Redeemer, *beseeching* them *to be reconciled:* And they draw out the hearts of believers to repentance, and lead them with the spirit of power and love, to an easy and connatural obedience by the constraints of the love of Christ, and by a humble persuasion of their acceptance in him unto eternal life.

In short, the one dwell most upon the duties of the gospel in their sermons, in order to qualify their hearers for the privileges: the other insist most upon the privileges and comforts of the gospel, in order to invite and allure them to fulfil the duties, and to give their hearers strength and delight in the discharge of these duties.

I would not here be understood, as though I suppose either of those ministers never to mingle mercy and terror, precepts, penalties, and promises; for it must be acknowledged, there are some persons of each opinion, in whom all the talents of a preacher happily unite, and they honourably sustain both characters, the sons of thunder, and the sons of consolation; and all of them make conscience of publishing to men both divine grace and their duty, all of them preach *repentance toward God*, and *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;* but those who have chosen one scheme of divinity for their own, more generally bend their ministry the one way, and those who have chosen the other preach more usually in the other way.

All our protestant confessions of faith, and I would persuade myself that our ministers, at least among the non-conformists, agree that, though duties are required to be performed by us, yet the grace that is necessary to perform them is given freely to us: that though faith and repentance, and sincere obedience are indispensably necessary, in order to our final salvation, yet they are not the justifying righteousness upon account of which our sins are pardoned, and eternal life is bestowed upon us: That the obedience and death, and intercession of Christ, as a proper high-priest and sacrifice, are the only foundation of our acceptance with God, and ground of all our hopes; and that from him, as a head of influence, we must receive all grace, whereby we are conducted safe to glory.

Both sides agree that we are to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, but *that it is God who worketh in us to will and to do;* Phil. ii. 12, 13. That we are saved *by the faith of the Son of God,* and *not by works lest any should boast;* yet that we must also be *created in Christ Jesus unto good works,* for *God hath* appointed *that we should walk in them;* Eph. ii. 8—10. In the next place,

II. That I may make a little further apology for those that are humble, honest and sincere on both sides, I would consider the various causes or occasions, whence different apprehensions of men about these things may arise: And here we shall find poor frail weak mankind, almost universally born and brought up in prejudices to some party or other, encompassed with a thousand things that tend to influence the judgment, and incline it insensibly toward some particular opinion; so that a whole scheme of doctrines built upon a pure and zealous and laborious search after truth, without any manner of bias or corruption on any side, is scarce to be found in human nature. There is no man alive free from these weaknesses. Happy the mind that has the fewest of them.

> " Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur, optimus ille est
> Qui minimis urgetur."——Hor.

It may be these ministers themselves, who differ in opinion, are of very different natural complexions and tempers, and this hath a secret influence in swaying their mind, their studies, their judgment and ministry one way or the other; though all those who agree in natural temper, are not always of the same opinion.

Or it may be, they had an education under teachers and tutors of different sentiments, or have met with books of different principles and opinions, which have made a strong and lasting impression upon their minds, and engaged them betimes into one party, before they had strength of judgment to determine their opinions upon just arguments.

Some persons in order to settle their judgments in these points, have studied more and prayed less, and some have prayed more and studied too little; and some on both sides have studied hard, and prayed much, and sought earnestly the instructions of the blessed Spirit, and yet have fallen into different ways of thinking in those parts of christianity which are not of necessity to salvation, and have been suffered to follow different forms of speech for wise purposes in the providence of God. Some little accident or occurrence of life, or some sudden start of thought, while the balance of the judgment was in suspence, has perhaps given it a turn to one side or the other, and perhaps determined it for their whole lives.

Some have happened to form their set of doctrines at first more by their own reasoning

powers, and drawn their schemes of religion from what they imagine the most natural connection, the necessity or congruity of things, and they call the Bible only to their assistance, and seek proper texts to confirm their own system: Others draw the whole scheme of doctrine from a constant and intent application to the holy scripture, and call in reason to their assistance only in order to understand and methodize those doctrines: And though the first way of study in matters of the christian religion, is by no means to be justified, yet too many have unhappily practised it; and though the latter way is much to be preferred, and most likely to come near the truth, yet it is not followed by all who preach the gospel; and no wonder then that ministers may differ in their thoughts.

Such is the weakness of human nature, that as some of us form and build up our first opinions upon very slight and insufficient grounds, and there are many who persist in them, and strongly maintain them without an honest re-examination, so others of us change our opinions upon reasons as slight and feeble and insufficient. Some persons having been perplexed with one or two great difficulties in that scheme of sentiments which they have professed, and being unable to grapple with them, have by swift or slow degrees, abandoned that whole scheme, and fell in with another, which perhaps hath equal or greater difficulties in it; never considering that the whole system of christianity, with all its appendices, is so vast, and our view of things is so narrow, and our knowledge so imperfect, that a sharp disputant may push some parts of all our human schemes into great perplexities, even such as human reason can hardly solve; and perhaps God alone knows how to reconcile them, in whose single view all things lie for ever fair and open, perfectly consistent, and are comprehended at once.

Or it may be the way and method of divine grace in the first conversion of the one and the other was very different. Some were wrought upon at first more by legal methods, and the terrors of the law of God, and they find them still to have the greatest and most powerful influence on their consciences; others from their wild wanderings were brought home to Christ by gentle discoveries of divine love in the death of a Saviour: Some, like the jailor; *Acts* xvi. 26—30. have had their consciences shaken as with an earthquake, they came in *trembling* and crying out, *what must I do to be saved?* Others had their hearts softly opened, as was the heart of Lydia, *verse* 14. of the same *chapter*, and *they received the word of grace* and the gospel; and they find the work of God carried on upon their own souls still, by the most evangelical methods. Now a man's own early experience in the things of religion, will naturally have a great influence on his opinions; and God in his infinite wisdom hath ordered it should be so, that persons of every sort and temper, and humour, young and old, sinners and saints, under every kind of temptation, might meet with some ministers of the gospel, and some sermons and writings to suit their taste, to hit their case, and be the most effectual means of their salvation. The third thing I proposed here was to shew briefly,

III. That as each of these ways of preaching have their several advantages, so each of them have their special inconveniences too, if they are perpetually and only insisted on, unless well managed by the extraordinary prudence of the preacher. The one aims most at the glory of divine equity, in rewards and punishments, and contends much for the sincerity of God in all his transactions with men: The other seems to look most at

honouring the sovereignty, the riches and freedom of divine grace, and God's infinite condescension and compassion to sinful creatures.

One seems to lead christians more to a strict scrupulosity in every action, in order to make up the undoubted evidences of a gospel perfection, which they call sincerity, and thereby to raise their hopes of escaping hell and obtaining heaven; it drives the soul to duties, and maintains a trembling watchfulness; but is in danger of governing it by a spirit of bondage, and of keeping our faith and comfort very low. The other leads to equal holiness, or perhaps to higher degrees of it by the delightful constraints of a filial love, by the sweet influences of divine consolation; but there may be some danger of encouraging negligence and presumption, and that not only in sinners, but even sometimes in believers themselves, if not wisely managed and guarded.

Upon this subject I might here give my pen into the hand of some sprightly advocate of each party, and have forty more pages written for me speedily, without any thought or labour of mine; this would swell my essay up finely, and enlarge it to a volume, with many a name of arminian and antinomian dealt about freely on the opposite opinions: For the supposed advantages and disadvantages on both sides, are frequently mentioned as arguments of each party against the other; but I shall not think necessary to insist longer on them here for that very reason: And though these sort of moral arguments, drawn from the design and tendency of things, may be justly used on both sides, and on both sides have some degree of truth and force in them, yet both may not have equal force: nor do I think it inconsistent with my design in this reconciling discourse, to declare my own sentiments: "For a man may be very happy in making peace between two quarrelling neighbours, though he is well persuaded that one hath the better side of the cause, and in a friendly manner expresseth it too."

I will not be ashamed then to declare, that in my opinion, one method of preaching the gospel hath greater advantages in it, and fewer inconveniences than the other; supposing still that we guard against extremes: That one seems more connatural to the genius of the gospel, as it is distinct from a covenant of works, and seems to suit better with the glorious designs of divine grace. My own experience in the things of religion, my observations of some others, and my diligent search of the holy scriptures, I hope not without divine aid, hath led my thoughts rather to favour and practise the more evangelical method of preaching most frequently: But another person who follows a different way may tell me, he came by his turn of thoughts the same way as I did by mine, and my charity demands that I believe it. Yet while both sides maintain those great truths, wherein I mentioned the general agreement of our protestant confessions of faith, I cannot conceive that either of them can lead sinners astray from salvation. And that is the fourth proposal I made, *viz.*

IV. To shew the real safety of each of these methods in ministering the gospel both to saints and sinners, and that is evident, because they agree in the most necessary and essential parts of it. Both of them preach grace and duty, justification by Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and teach men all that is of necessity to be believed and practised in order to salvation.

If two men sitting under a different ministry are brought sincerely to repent of all sin, and to love God with all their heart, can I imagine that one shall be damned, because he tells me he repents in obedience to the commands of the gospel? Or the other, because he doth it in obedience to the moral law in the hand of Christ, supposing the

pure gospel to have no commands in it? If two sinners are persuaded to accept of Christ Jesus for their Lord and Saviour, can I ever believe that God will condemn one of them, because he first resolved to obey Christ as his Lord, and thereby took encouragement to trust in him as a Saviour? Or that God will punish the other for ever, because he first trusted in Christ as a Saviour, and thereby found his will sweetly inclined to submit to him as his Lord? Where all duties required in the gospel are sincerely performed, can I ever be persuaded men shall be sent to hell, merely because they do not agree about the logical relations that these duties have to one another, or to their salvation, while both agree to lay the Lord Jesus Christ, and *his righteousness*, or his obedience and death as the only foundation of all their hopes?

If either of these ways of preaching the gospel, were so contrary to scripture, and such abominable and pernicious errors in the sight of God, as angry and quarrelling men of both sides represent them, I cannot persuade myself that God would so far have favoured both, in these instances following, *viz.*

I. If either of these ways of preaching were so criminal and dangerous as some have supposed, I cannot think the Spirit of God would have used those expressions in scripture, which sometimes seem to represent the covenant of grace in one form, and sometimes in another; nor that he would have suffered the penmen of his holy word to have given occasion to such different sentiments on this subject among his favourites, his holy worshippers, and those who have sought his directions and his grace with much importunity and perseverance.

II. If either of these ways of preaching were so dangerous as some have imagined, I cannot believe that the blessed God would ever have attended both these ways of preaching with his blessing, so far as to convert great numbers of sinners by them, and edify his saints; but it is sufficiently evident that ministers of very different apprehensions in these points have been owned and blessed of God to the conversion comfort and salvation of many souls.

III. If either of these representations of the gospel were so very dangerous, I cannot imagine, that persons of good understanding, of deep learning, of large knowledge and religion, of long experience, and of great holiness, should maintain their opinions in these things so very different to their lives' end, if their salvation were in such extreme hazard thereby, however in the infancy of their christianity they might have received and embraced these different apprehensions. Surely if these points had been of so dreadful and dangerous importance on either side, God would have granted a greater union in sentiment to so great a number of his children, who laboured in sincere enquiry after truth, constant and fervent prayer for the teaching of the blessed Spirit, and were truly zealous for his honour. Divine goodness surely would not have suffered such multitudes of holy souls on either side, to continue always in mistakes of so terrible consequence, as some disputers have represented them.

SECTION V.

ADVICES OR REQUESTS.

May I be permitted at the end of this discourse to drop a word or two of general advice, or rather of humble request to all, but especially to my younger brethren in the ministry.

Request I. "Pay a constant and sacred reverence to the language of scripture," and let it appear in these following instances:

1. Let the forms of speech that are used in those scriptures where the doctrines of the gospel are expressly laid down and proved, be the speech in which you commonly teach those doctrines and let the language wherein warm and pathetical exhortations are given in scripture, be the language which you generally imitate in your affectionate addresses to the consciences of saints and sinners; the one as well as the other are given for our example. Whereas if we should preach and explain the deepest truths in all the affectionate forms and flourishes of speech and metaphor, it is the way to lead the judgments of hearers astray; but while we submit ourselves to the *words which the Holy Spirit* useth as our pattern, both in teaching, and also in exhorting, we may humbly expect his inward teachings to enlighten our own understandings, and make our labours in the gospel powerful to the salvation of them that hear us.

2. Let those words which are not used in scripture never be zealously maintained and insisted on as necessary to salvation, and especially where they give great offence: Nor let those terms and ways of expression which scripture useth but very seldom, and upon particular occasions, be the perpetual or constant language of your ministry, in opposition to those expressions and ways of representation which scripture most frequently delights to use; and let no authentic systems of divinity to which you are most inclined, nor the names of great men ever prevail with you to break this rule.

3. Dare not indulge yourself in a disgust to any scripture language, or an aversion to those scriptures which seem to run in a style and expression different from the language which you generally choose; for even those expressions were designed for useful purposes by the Holy Spirit, and doubtless have attained some happy end in the providence of God, in particular cases and persons: If you should once encourage such a vicious humour, it might proceed so far at last, as to render a great part of the Bible the object of your disgust. Be sure therefore always to maintain upon your spirit such a reverential tenderness for the holy scripture, that you may never dare to rail against any expressions that scripture useth, nor oppose them with violence, without a modest distinction in what sense they are proper, and in what sense they are to be avoided. And this leads me to the second request,

Request II. When you hear any ministers, in preaching the gospel, use the words "free and absolute, conditional, unconditional, promises, laws, threatenings, commands, &c. exercise so much charity as to believe they use them in such a sense as the scripture approves of, and as secures the salvation of men," according to their sincerest apprehensions.

If the preacher speak of the gospel, as a free and absolute promise, always suppose he intends also, that all the duties of repentance and holiness are necessary, in order to salvation, though he does not like to call them conditions. If another should insist much on conditions in the gospel, suppose he means none of them to be performed merely by your own strength, nor to include any thing of merit in them. If he speak of the laws of Christ, understand him concerning all those rules and directions, and commands, which Christ hath given to his followers, but not in the strict and perfect notion of a law. Even if he calls the gospel a law, believe that he intends it only in the largest sense, and doth not mean that we are justified in the sight of God, by our performance of the duties of this law as the proper matter of our righteousness before

God: Or if he should happen to mention any such thing as justification by our good works of holiness, &c. take due heed to the connection, and let charity persuade you that he is speaking concerning justification before men, or justification in our own consciences, or in the day of judgment, and not of a sinner's justifying righteousness in the sight of God, when he is first converted and accepted of him through faith in Jesus Christ.

Suffer not your disgust and anger immediately to be kindled at the sound of any of these words, as though they were at once undermining and perverting the gospel of Christ. Nor ever give yourself leave to reproach ministers, as no preachers of the gospel, merely because they choose other modes of expression than those which you most esteem, and frequently use; for such a conduct will warp and bind down the consciences and spirits of men to a narrow and an uncharitable partiality. This will render every sermon offensive to them that is not conceived just in their beloved language, and will utterly prevent their profit by the various gifts Christ has bestowed on his ministers. There are some common christians in our age, who are most unhappy instances of this unchristian temper; and it is to these persons chiefly, that I give this second advice.

Request. III. "Avoid all the high flights and extremes of zealous partymen," and which way of preaching soever you approve and pursue, be sure to guard against all extremes, both of notion and language. Let the hopes of exalting free-grace never persuade you to neglect to enforce the duties of the gospel, and to press them with zeal on the consciences of all men: Nor let the fear of encouraging licentiousness ever tempt you to turn the gospel of grace into a covenant of works: For God, in his gospel of free-grace, hath sufficiently provided for the honour of his holiness, and the sanctification of his own children.

You will tell me here perhaps, that scripture itself useth expressions as high upon particular occasions, and as much leaning to extremes as any men of party among us. But remember then, that the scripture uses such strong and high expressions not on one side only, but on both sides, and infinite wisdom hath done this more forcibly to argue and impress some present truth or duty: But while it is evident the holy writers have used high expressions, strong figures of speech, and vehement turns on both sides, this sufficiently instructs us that we should be moderate in our censures of either side, and that the calm doctrinal truth, stripped of all rhetoric and figures, lies nearer to the middle, or at least that some of these appearing extremes, are more reconcileable than angry men will generally allow. If the apostle charges the Corinthians, *so run that ye may obtain;* 1 Cor. ix. 24. and tells the Romans, *It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy;* Rom. ix. 16. we may plainly infer that our running and his mercy, our diligence and divine grace, are both necessary to our salvation.

Request. IV. "Let the particular tempers, temptations and dangers of persons with whom you converse, or with whom you preach, together with the growing errors of the times, have always some weight with you, to bend your ministry a little more the one way or the other:" And never affect to preach these matters in a disputative and controversial way, but rather in a plain and practical form, except the temptations of the age and nation, or of particular churches or christians seem to demand it. And indeed this seems to be one great reason, why scripture itself in different parts of it sometimes manages the argument in a way of dispute, and at other times gives a different

practical turn to the same truth, and uses so different language in the representation of the same doctrines. For the several books of scripture were written according to the various necessities of the church of God, and to obviate temptations of contrary kinds, and to prevent the danger of errors arising, by running to extremes on either side.

In the last age, in the times of the civil wars, antinomianism and errors of that nature, were very common in the nation: This turned the labours and study of many pious men to vindicate and preach up the duties of the gospel, and works of holiness, as the proper business of the day. In this present age, the popish and pelagian doctrines of justification by works, and salvation by the power of our own free-will, are publicly maintained and preached abundantly through the land: The socinian and the arminian errors are revived and spread exceedingly, whereby Jesus Christ is robbed of his godhead, or his satisfaction, or both, and the blessed Spirit denied in the glory of his offices: For deism and natural religion, in opposition to christianity, daily prevail.

Now, perhaps, some may think it the duty and business of the day to temporize, and by preaching the gospel a little more conformably to natural religion, in a mere rational or legal form, to bring it down as near as may be to their scheme, that we may gain them to hear and approve it, or at least, that we may not offend them. But I am rather of opinion, that we should in such a day stand up for the defence of the gospel in the full glory of its most important doctrines, and in the full freedom of its grace; that we should preach it in its divinest and most evangelical form, that the cross of Christ, by the promised power of the Spirit, may vanquish the vain reasonings of men, and that this despised doctrine triumphing in the conversion of souls, may *confound the wise and the mighty*, and silence *the disputers of this world*. This was the bold and glorious method St. Paul took at Corinth, where learning and reason and philosophy flourished in pride: but they yielded several trophies of victory to the preaching of the cross. Paul could use *the wisdom of words* whensoever he had occasion for it, and had the *excellency of speech* at command when he pleased: This appears in several parts of his writings; yet in his sermons at Corinth, he disclaimed it all, and *determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Happy that man who hath attained the holy skill of joining promises and commands, duties and privileges, authority, terror and grace; and who mingles them all wisely in his ministry; who hath learned of St. Paul the divine art of addressing himself to the reason, the consciences, and the passions of men in such variety of expressions, of power, terror and love, as may most effectually answer the ends of his office. Happy is he that knows how to display the gospel in all forms under which scripture represents it, to preach to the Jews, and to teach the gentiles; to talk to the righteous and the wicked in proper language, to the obstinate rebel, to the trembling sinner, and to the mourning saint. Happy is he that *becomes all to all that he may gain* the more souls; 1 Cor. ix. 19—22. sometimes *as without the law, yet under a law to Christ;* sometimes as with the law, yet free from the bondage of it; that never *strives about words to no profit*, but knows how to *divide the word of truth aright, and to give every one their portion:* This is the *workman that needs not to be ashamed*, and hath most reason to hope for success; 2 *Tim.* ii. 14, 15.

To conclude, "Let us all apply ourselves with unbiassed minds, with new diligence and fervent prayers, to search the word of God, and draw all our notions of the gospel thence:" Let us enquire into the spiritual state, the dangers and necessities of the

people to whom we minister, and this will be of great use to guide us to proper subjects and methods of discourse.

Let our conversation be such, as becomes the gospel in every form of it, whether absolute or conditional. Let our close walking with God be exemplary and instructive, that men may see our religion as well as hear it, and all may confess, that while we preach the gospel, we are zealous observers of the law. Let us maintain upon our own hearts a sweet and honourable sense of the riches of free-grace in Christ, together with a tender sense of the evil of sin, and a lively delight in holiness, that the daily experience of our own souls, and our inward christianity which is taught us, and wrought in us by the Spirit of God, may instruct us how to preach to others.

Let that gospel which is *written in the fleshly tables of our hearts*, that is, in our very souls, *by the finger of God*, be manifested in every part of our ministrations for the good of men. Thus we shall obtain the approbation of Jesus our judge, in preaching his gospel of faith and love, and thus shall we have the pleasure of *this testimony in our own consciences*, that in the general course of our ministry we have sought to save the souls of others in the same way as we ourselves have sought to be saved: And that we have proposed the same truths to them, and recommended the same duties, which we ourselves believe and practise, in order to our own salvation. *Amen.*

ESSAY III.

THE TRUE USE OF THE MORAL LAW UNDER THE GOSPEL.

Exemplified in the Conference of Christ with a young Pharisee, explained in a Sermon, May 1711.

MATT. xix. 17.

IF THOU WILT ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.

SECTION I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

HERE it will be necessary to run over the short conference between Christ and this young man, which is recorded by several of the evangelists, because it will give us a plainer account how these words are introduced, and lead us into the knowledge of the true design of them.

Read from the 16th to the 23d verse: *And behold one came and said unto him, good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?* 17. *And he said unto him, why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter into life; keep the commandments.* 18. *He saith unto him, which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.* 19. *Honour thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* 20. *The young man saith unto him, all these have I kept from my youth: What lack I yet?* 21. *Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.* 22. *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.* 23. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* This is the history.

The person who addressed the Lord Jesus Christ here, was a young man, and wealthy, as this sacred writer informs us; and that he was a ruler among the Jews, St. Luke gives us notice; *Luke* xviii. 18. That he was either a pharisee, or at least one of the stricter sort of the Jews, seems evident, because he sought after eternal life, whereas the sadducees denied a future state, many of the higher as well as the looser part of the nation disregarded it. He appears leavened with the common pharisaical doctrine, *viz.* that the way to procure eternal life was by his own good works, by doing some good thing.

It is probable he had heard of the miracles and the fame of our blessed Lord, and believed him to be *a teacher sent from God*, for he comes in a humble manner as to a divine prophet, he seems to be in good earnest in the question which he puts to Christ, and seriously concerned about the welfare of his soul. He did not come with a design to ensnare Christ in his words, as that sort of men, *viz.* the pharisees often did: Nor did he come with useless perplexing questions, as the scribes and sadducees and lawyers sometimes had done: But, as St. Mark relates the history, he shewed some tokens of sincerity; *Mark* x. 17. for he came running to Jesus with diligence and speed, longing to have the opinion of a new prophet about a matter of such importance, as the obtaining of eternal life: *He kneeled* down to him, and paid our Saviour much civil respect: He received the directions of Christ with attention, and when he found in his heart that his love to his riches would not let him comply with the terms proposed, *he went away sorrowful.* There was something in his design and in his deportment, that was lovely and amiable, and we find that our Saviour, as a man, looked on him with a love of complacency; *Mark* x. 21. But he was not so zealous a lover of God to part with earth for heaven. We may suppose this young gentleman, who seems to be a follower or disciple of the pharisees, might probably have one or more of these three designs in his question, *viz.*

I. Whereas the law of Moses promises long life in the land of Canaan, and the blessings of this world to those that are obedient to the statutes and ordinances which God enjoined to Israel; but it scarce ever mentions, plainly and expressly, any promises of eternal life in another world, nor the methods to attain it; and whereas this youth was fully convinced from several of the writings of the prophets, that there was a future state and eternal happiness in another world to be obtained, he comes now to Jesus, as a new and divine teacher, to seek an answer to this question about eternal life, which he could not find an express answer to in the law of Moses; and he would fain know whether he must obtain eternal life the same way that he was to seek for a long life on earth, and temporal blessings, namely, by an outward obedience to the laws already given to the Jews.

II. We may suppose him enquiring after some shorter and more compendious way to eternal life, by practising some one or two extraordinary instances of duty, and thereby to atone for the neglect of the rest. This was an error that prevailed among the pharisees in our Saviour's time, as seems to be sufficiently evident from their doctrine, as it is represented; *Matt.* xv. 5, 6. Whosoever shall make a great present to God and his temple, as some interpret the word corban, or a gift, *he shall be free* from all relative duties to parents, &c. So *Matt.* xxiii. 23. if they did but pay tithes duly to the priest they might be saved, though they neglected *the weighty matters of the law, justice judgment and mercy, and the love of God.* So the pharisee that went into the temple to pray, *he fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that he possessed,* and he accounted himself righteous; *Luke* xviii. 12.

And upon this account you find the question proposed elsewhere to our Saviour; Matt. xxii. 36. *Which is the great commandment of the law?* Some were for circumcision, as a most ancient precept, and therefore of the most general obligation: Some for the sabbath, because it was so strictly enjoined to the Jews: And some for sacrifice, as being in their opinion a sufficient expiation and atonement for any other defects

whatsoever. They thought one or other of these to be the critical points on which salvation depended.

And generally we find that the commands of God, of an external or ceremonial nature, or the mere inventions and traditions of men, were thus aggrandized by the teachers of the Jews, as though heaven might be obtained in a short way, by practising those formalities, without the long labours of watchfulness and abstinence from sin, and obedience to every moral command of the law. Yet we must suppose this person to be one of the better sort of them too, for he had endeavoured to keep the moral law, at least in the outward and visible duties of it, as well as ceremonial, even *from* his *youth up*, as he tells our Saviour.

III. Or we may suppose this young man hearing the fame of Christ, as the great prophet that was to come into the world, might expect some new and unheard of doctrines, some new and unknown way to heaven, which the law and the old prophets had never spoken of; especially since he thought he had already fulfilled all that they had required: And therefore *he came running to Christ*, kneeling down with earnest desire to be taught this new revelation, this method of obtaining heaven and eternal life, which the new prophet was sent to teach: And perhaps he might imagine Jesus to be the Messiah: And they knew that *when the Messiah came he would teach them all things*, which all the former prophets and Moses himself had not fully acquainted them with; *John* iv. 25.

Or may we not suppose all these three designs together, to be in the heart of this young querist? As if he should say, "*Good Master*, Moses in his five books hath spoken much of life, long life in the land of promise, but hath not given us an express account of life eternal in the other world, nor prescribed the special methods to attain it; I would therefore fain learn that of thee. And whereas the statutes and ceremonies, and commands and judgments, and duties of the law, are very numerous and difficult, is there no *one good thing* that may be as acceptable to God as all the rest, and give me a title to eternal happiness, in a short and compendious manner? Or is there any new way to heaven which thou discoverest to men? As thou seemest to preach up a future state, a heaven and a hell in the other world, dost thou come to give any new directions how to avoid this hell, and obtain this heaven?"

Our Lord, before he answered this question takes occasion to ask him, why he called him *good*, which was a title that eminently belonged to God only: The best conjecture that interpreters can make of this query, is this, *viz.* Jesus searched into his opinion concerning himself, whether he knew or believed that he was the Messiah or the Son of God, who was "one with the Father," and thereby had a right to divine titles and characters, and might justly be called good in a divine sense. Perhaps Jesus might have, before this time, manifested this his own oneness with God; but if he had not, yet there were several descriptions of the Messiah in the Old Testament, wherein the names and titles of the true God are given to the Messiah, which could not be given him without such a oneness with God, and therefore he might justly take occasion to catechise such a forward young man who seemed to be conceited of his own righteousness, &c. It is as if Jesus had said, "Thou *callest me good: There is none* originally, eternally and perfectly *good but God* himself; none good as God is; none hath right to the title in the most absolute and exalted sense of it but God: Why then dost thou use this salutation to me, and give me this title? Dost thou think any thing more than human dwells

in me? Hast thou known or observed any of those speeches or those miracles of mine whereby I have asserted and proved that *I am in the Father and the Father in me*, or, that I am *one with the Father*, and so partake with him in the title of good?" See *John* x. 30, 37, 38. and xiv. 8—10.

Here it may be remarked, that our Saviour did not use to publish his own divinity, or oneness with God, in plain and express terms to the people, but generally by such methods of enquiry and insinuation. See *Mark* ii. 5—11. where he had forgiven the sins of a man that was sick of the palsy before he healed him; and then he proves by the miracle of healing, that he had a right to forgive sin, while the Jews acknowledge that none could forgive sins but God alone. So *John* x. 30—36. after he had given a hint of his Deity, by saying, *I and my Father are one*, the Jews would have stoned him for pretending to be God; which he answers by such an enquiry: Since those are *called gods* in scripture, *to whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, he blasphemeth, because I said I am the Son of God?* Such a sort of oblique insinuation, or enquiry concerning the divinity of his person, seems to be our Lord's design in this text. If this be not the purport and intention of this question, I must confess I am ignorant of the design of it. But this seems to me the most probable conjecture.

Then immediately he proceeds to give our young querist an answer to his question, *If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.* The young man again seems to have his former designs in his eye, when he asks "*which* commandment he should keep?" As if he should say, "Is it any one particular commandment or commandments of Moses that I must keep? and if I have kept them, is there any new commandment thou wilt give me, whereby eternal life will be insured to me?"

Our Lord replies, Keep the common commandments of the law, "Thou knowest them," as *Mark* x. 17. It is not by observing any one command and neglecting the rest, but the way to enter into life is obedience to all the old commandments, for *I am not come to* break or dissolve *the law of God*, but to confirm or *fulfil it;* Matt. v. 17—19. And though our Lord Jesus mentions only those of the second table, and the duties towards men, yet we must suppose he means inclusively all the rest; for he saith in Matt. v. 19. *Whosoever shall teach men to break the least of the commandments* of the law, *shall be the least in the kingdom of heaven*, that is, shall have no place there. Our Saviour doth not give a dispensation to neglect duties toward God, by mentioning only the duties toward our neighbour; but the reasons why he mentions them seem chiefly these two:

1. Because these duties to their neighbours were those which the pharisees, who boasted of their own righteousness, more particularly neglected, while they pretended to much devotion and worship of God in all the forms of his appointment: And therefore our Lord insists particularly upon these commands that relate to our fellow-creatures to shew him that these were as necessary a part of his duty, as all the more pompous services of God in his temple.

2. Because it might be more easy for his own conscience to convince him of the neglect of these moral and relative duties towards his fellow-creatures, than of his neglect of religious duties towards God: And our Saviour thought when he had named these, he had named commandments enough to shew him the imperfection of his righteousness: Therefore he did not proceed to mention them all.

And it may be noted, that our Lord reckons up these commands not in their exact order, nor exactly in the words of the Old Testament, but with a more loose and negligent way of repeating them, because he spoke to a man that was supposed to know them already: *Thou knowest all the commandments* which I refer to, even the commands of the moral law, *Do not kill, do not steal,* &c.

SECTION II.

THE SENSE OF CHRIST'S ANSWER.

Now the great and important question comes naturally into sight: In what sense did our Saviour speak these words to the young enquirer, *If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments?* Did he design to give him a plain and direct answer how he might obtain eternal life and salvation, according to the gospel? Or did he design only to convince him of sin, by preaching the law to him, in order to make him see his guilt and misery, that he might seek after a better righteousness than that of the works of the law, another way of obtaining acceptance with God and eternal life, than merely by his own doings? I answer, the last of these seems to be the design of Christ. He did not intend in these words to give him immediate and direct instruction, how he might actually obtain salvation, but rather first to convince him of sin, &c. and I would offer these following reasons for it:

I. The answer of Christ is exactly suited to his question. Now his question was about eternal life to be obtained by works, and not about the salvation of a sinner by the mercy of God. He did not ask, as the convinced jailor; *Acts* xvi. 30. *What shall I do to be saved,* or to obtain salvation? But what *good work* must *I do* to obtain *eternal life* by it?

It is granted that eternal life is sometimes put for the final happiness of believers under the gospel, because it is included in the salvation of Christ; yet life and eternal life are peculiarly and properly the blessings promised in the law of works, in which sense the word salvation is never used: and the scripture in some places by this way of expression makes this distinction evident: See the terms of the law or covenant of works, both in its command and its reward, as it is described in direct opposition to the gospel, and method of salvation, in *Rom.* x. 5, 6. *Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doth these things shall live by them;* whereas *the righteousness of faith,* that is the way of justification and acceptance with God by the gospel, says quite other things, *If thou shalt believe and confess Christ,* &c. *verses* 9, 10. So St. Paul describes the promised blessings of the law of works, in the same manner, in his epistle to the Galatians, Gal. iii. 12. *The law is not of faith, but the man who doth them shall live in them.* Life is still the word of the promise. And in *Rom.* ii. 6, 7. where the apostle is properly preaching the law of works with the terms of it, it is called *immortality, eternal life,* to be obtained by continuance in good works, or *well-doing.*

It is this eternal life and immortality which was implied in the covenant of works which God made with Adam. If he did eat the forbidden fruit, he should die; but if he observed the commands of God, he should live; and the tree of life, in the midst

of the garden, was a symbol or sacrament of life and immortality to seal this promise to man, if he continued in his obedience to God.

Our Lord therefore gives an answer exactly according to the question, *What good thing shall I do for eternal life?* saith the enquirer. *Keep the commandments,* saith our Lord. When the young man proposes his question about final happiness in the terms and language of the covenant of works, our Lord gives an answer in the same language: "If thou wilt obtain life by doing works, these are the works which thou must do, even the works of the moral law."

II. I suppose Jesus Christ, the chief minister of the covenant of grace would not give this direction to obtain the salvation and benefits thereof, because it is the most direct answer which a preacher of the covenant of works could give to this same enquiry; *If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.* And this is very different from the terms of justification and salvation by the gospel, which exclude the works of the law, as the way to pardon and justification, and refer us to faith in Jesus Christ. See *Gal.* iii. 11, 12. *Rom.* x. 5, 6. already cited. Is it not most expressly asserted, that *by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified? Rom.* iii. 19, 20. Are not these works perpetually excluded by the blessed apostle, whensoever he is describing the mere method of grace and salvation, or the means for a sinner to obtain his acceptance with God unto eternal life? See *Rom.* iv. 4. *To him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace but of debt:* But *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly,* that is, the man who has no works of righteousness answerable to any law, *his faith is counted for righteousness;* Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ,* &c. See *Gal.* iii. 8—12.

And it is plain, that it is not merely the law of levitical ceremonies that the apostle speaks of, when he excludes the works of it from our justification, for it is also that law which is written by nature in the hearts and consciences of the gentiles; *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. It is the law that forbids stealing and adultery; *Rom.* ii. 21, 22. The law that forbids coveting; *Rom.* vii. 6, 7. even this very law, and those commandments which our Saviour makes mention of in my text. It is by the works of this law no flesh shall be justified, no man shall be saved, or obtain eternal happiness; *Rom.* iii. 20. Now can we suppose that Christ, the great messenger of God to sinful man, and the prophet of the gospel or covenant of grace, would give the very same advice and direction to a sinner how to obtain salvation, which a preacher of the law, or a zealot for the covenant of works, would give to one who thought himself righteous, and never confessed himself a sinner but enquired about obtaining life by his good works?

III. It is hardly to be thought that Christ should direct a man to fulfil the commands of the moral law, as the proper way for him to obtain eternal life, when through the weakness of our sinful nature, he knew the law could not give life to men in their fallen estate, and he himself was sent to provide another way for them to obtain life. *Rom.* viii. 10. *What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent his own Son* to do for us. Rom. iii. 20. *By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.* This does not arise from any weakness or insufficiency of the law itself, for it still promises life, and would secure it to any man who was perfect without sin. But as the apostle says, it is *become weak through the flesh,* that is, because man is so much immersed in flesh and sin that he cannot perfectly fulfil it. The law cannot give the favour of God and eternal life, because man cannot obey it.

And upon this account the law of ten commands, which was engraven in stones, is called *the ministration of condemnation* and death; 2 *Cor.* iii. 7—9. and not the ministration of life and righteousness; that is the peculiar glory of the gospel. *The law indeed is holy and just and good,* and it was originally *ordained for life* to innocent man: But when the apostle Paul came to have his conscience awakened to a sense of sin by the law, he *found it to be unto death;* Rom. vii. 10. partly by shewing him his imperfection of obedience, as well as by irritating his indwelling sinful inclinations. So far is the law from giving life to sinners.

God honours his laws so much that the scripture assures us, *If there had been a law which could have given life,* eternal life, *verily righteousness,* justification and happiness *should have come by the law;* Gal. iii. 21, 22. *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,* and condemned them by the law, and has shewn the insufficiency of the law to save, *that the promise of eternal life by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* It is not to be supposed therefore, that Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was sent into this world to give, or further reveal this promise of eternal life by faith, and to provide another way to salvation and eternal life for fallen man, because the law was unable to give it; I say, it is not to be supposed that this very Son of God should preach obedience to the commands of this law, as the proper and direct way for a sinner to obtain eternal life. This would be like *building* up *again* the hopes of sinners to obtain salvation by the law, which hopes he came to destroy, and to provide a much surer foundation for hope.

IV. It is much more probable that Christ in these words designed to lead this young man to a sense of sin and guilt, and self-condemnation, by preaching to him the law of God, rather than to give him immediately the direct and plain advice how a sinner might obtain eternal happiness; for this is a work which the law can do, even in our fallen state: *For by the law is the knowledge of sin,* Rom. iii. 20. and vii. 7. The law can convince and condemn, though it cannot justify and save. Our Saviour knew the hearts of men; he knew this young man was conceited of his own righteousness, and he had a mind to lead his conscience to a sight and sense of the imperfection of his obedience, and therefore he preaches the law to him in many of the express commands of it, for that very end which the law might attain, that is, conviction of sin and self-condemnation. This is the first thing necessary in order to the salvation of men, and therefore our Saviour begins with it.

And it is well worthy our notice, that the public promulgation of the ten commandments, with such solemn terrors at Mount Sinai, was designed, in the spiritual intention of it, to lay the consciences of men under guilt, rather than to make them partakers of righteousness and life. *Rom.* v. 20. *The law entered that the offence might abound,* that is, that the sins of men might appear to be great and numerous, beyond what their carnal imaginations would have supposed, without the express letter of the law, which forbids coveting, &c. The apostle Paul tells us; *Rom.* vii. 7. *He had not known* this concupiscence to be sin, *but by the law;* and that useful expositor of scripture, Mr. Samuel Clark, who is not wont to be too evangelical in his expositions, remarks on *Exod.* xix. 24. That the charge of forbidding the people to come near Mount Sinai, is often repeated, lest God *break forth upon them,* to shew that the end of the law is rather to exclude men from God, by reason of their sins, than to justify or to give life; for which he cites, 2 *Cor.* iii. 7. *Gal.* iii. 10—24.

And indeed this was one considerable part of the design and business of our Saviour's personal ministry here on earth, *viz.* to preach the law of God in its perfection, and convince men of sin, to let them see that they were condemned and exposed to the wrath of God, that they might learn the necessity of a Saviour to atone for sin, and of the mercy of God to pardon it. He described the purity and exactness of the law, not only to teach his disciples and all succeeding christians, that their obedience to the law of God ought to be more exact and pure, more inward and spiritual, than what the pharisees required or practised, but also to shew men the imperfection of their best righteousness, and that they were all guilty before God, that he might prepare them to receive the gospel, partly by his own preaching it, and especially when it should be published in greater brightness and clearness, and in its full glory, after his resurrection.

Was not this one great design of his sermon upon the mount, where he explains the law of God in its lengths and breadths, and shews that it reaches to the thoughts of men as well as their actions? Did he not begin this sermon with, *Blessed are the poor in spirit;* Matt. v. 3. that he might shew the way to blessedness was not a self-sufficience of soul, and a trust in our own righteousness, but a spiritual poverty, that is, a humble sense of our own weakness and sinfulness? What mean many of his parables, particularly that of the prodigal son returning in rags and sorrow to his father's house? *Luke* xv. 13—32. Doth it not teach us that the way to be accepted of our heavenly Father is to return to him with a deep sense of our disobedience, sin and misery, with a humble repentance, and asking forgiveness? What is the intent of the parable of the pharisee and publican going up to pray? *Luke* xviii. 10. Is it not to shew us that a humble, confessing, repenting sinner seeking for mercy, is much nearer to justification and the favour of God, than a man who spreads abroad his own righteousness and justifies himself? What means our blessed Lord in his perpetual reproofs of the pharisees who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous?* verse 9. Did he not frequently talk thus to convince men of sin, and shew them how imperfect their obedience was, and how insufficient to procure acceptance with God, and to let them see that repentance and confession of sin, and trust in divine mercy, were the only way to salvation.

It is no wonder then if our Saviour had the same design in his eye when he saw a rich young man of a pharisaical spirit, come to enquire the way to heaven by doing some good work; it is no wonder that he begun to talk to him of obedience to the law, in order to convince him of sin, and shew him that he was not sufficiently righteous to obtain eternal life by his righteousness.

It is most likely that our blessed Lord had a special intention in this place to try the young man, whether he knew his own state and case as a sinner who wanted pardon, and whether he was prepared for the gospel or no: Whether he stood convinced of sin, and desirous of true salvation, such as Christ came to procure for those who were sensible of their guilt and danger. I have before shewed that the first sentence that Christ spoke to him was with design to try his opinion about himself, the Messiah, when he called him *good*, whether he was *one with God* or no: And now he tries his opinion about the inward and spiritual perfection of the law, and about his own power to keep it, and about his own hope of justification thereby: And therefore he at first gives him such an answer as should make him bethink himself, whether he had obeyed the law of God perfectly or no.

If he had found him sensible of his guilt and his imperfections, then most probably the compassionate Jesus would have preached to him the pardoning grace of the gospel, which he came to offer to those who repent of sin, and believe in the Saviour. But when he heard the vain enquirer justify himself as a righteous man, and say, *All these* commands *have I kept from my youth;* Matt. xix. 16. then our Saviour put him to a fresh and more painful trial of his sincerity and obedience to God, and that partly for his conviction, instead of saying, *repent and believe;* he did not proceed so far as to preach repentance to him, because he saw him so much unconvinced of sin; and he tells us that *he came not to call* these *righteous* men *but sinners to repentance;* Matt. ix. 13. that is, those who own themselves to be sinners.

This leads me to the fifth or last reason, to prove that this answer was not designed by Christ as a direction to the querist how to obtain salvation, *viz.* It is a quite different answer to the like questions that is given by Christ, and by the apostles, when they designed to preach the gospel in plain, direct and express language, *Mark* i. 15. Christ saith, *Repent and believe the gospel.* John vi. 40. *This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.* And again, *This is the work of God,* that is, thegreat work which God now requires, *that ye believe on him whom he sent;* John vi. 28, 29. So preaches St. Peter, Acts ii. 38. *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ:* So Paul, Acts xvi. 31. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:* And so John speaks, *This is his commandment that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;* 1 John iii. 23. These are the plain and direct advices of Christ and his apostles to sinful men, in order to obtain the favour of God and eternal life. To suppose therefore that Christ did in this place, and in these words, direct the enquirer into the proper way of salvation by the gospel, is to suppose that Christ differed greatly from himself, in the directions he gave, how men might be saved; and that he and his apostles, and particularly St. Paul, taught very different doctrines; that Christ taught the way to salvation by the works of the law, and the gospel taught it by faith and repentance, *without the works of the law.* But this would set Christ and his apostles so much at variance with themselves, that it is not to be admitted.

SECTION III.

AN ANSWER TO SOME OBJECTIONS.

I come now to answer some objections against my sense of this text, and the chief of them are taken from Doctor Whitby, a most ingenious writer on that side.

Objection I. Doth not Christ say, that "to love the Lord our God is the way to life;" *Luke* x. 27, 28. Is not this the same thing in effect, as when he directs the young man to eternal life, by keeping the commandments, and that in the same language? For when the lawyer enquires, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life;" Jesus gives him this advice, *Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself: This do and thou shalt live.* Thus eternal life is promised by Christ himself, to our loving God and man, which is the epitome or abstract of all the moral commands in one, for *love is the fulfilling of the law;* Rom. xiii. 8, 10.

Answer I. It is very plain that in that place our Saviour is preaching the covenant of works, as well as in my text, and that for the same purpose too, *viz.* for the conviction

of sin. This lawyer was not a humble and sincere enquirer, but one who came to tempt and ensnare him; and then it is no wonder if Jesus did not give him a plain and direct answer according to the method of salvation by the gospel. And though he directed others *to believe and repent*, yet he did not treat a vain young pharisee, who thought himself righteous, and a cunning lawyer, who designed to ensnare him, in the same manner that he would treat persons who were sensible of their sins, and sought the way to obtain pardon and happiness, nor did he give them the same directions.

Answer II. Let it be further considered, that the life-time of Christ was not the appointed season to speak the glories of the gospel in the fullest and plainest language, as I hinted before. His frequent business and practice was to preach the law, to reprove sin, and prepare men for the fuller and more complete ministry of the gospel, which after his death he sent his apostles to preach by the power of his own Spirit: And they published the gospel of salvation by *repentance and faith* in the blood of Christ, and forgiveness through his atonement, much plainer and clearer, and fuller than Christ himself did in his life-time among the multitudes. That gospel which he taught them secretly, they proclaimed as it were *upon the house tops*, according to his order; *Matt.* x. 27.

Though Christ himself gave such hints of this gospel in his preaching, as were sufficient for salvation to those that would receive them, yet he might be said to be sent rather with this dreadful commission to the generality of the Jews; *Mat.* xiii. 13. *Isa.* vi. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes*, &c. They were such a stubborn and self-conceited and disobedient people, that God justly gave them up to their own blindness and hardness: And for this reason our Saviour spake often the great things of the gospel to them in parables *. He was ordained to be *a stumbling-stone and rock of offence* to the house of Israel and Judah; *Isa.* viii. 14. 1 *Pet.* ii. 8. and this by the just judgment of God, for their stoning the prophets, and murdering the former messengers of heaven, for their forsaking the law of God, and *making it void by their traditions*, and for their violent opposition to Christ his Son. Christ was not always bound to speak the gospel to this people in as plain words as he could, for reasons that the wisdom of God was well acquainted with, reasons that the justice of God righteously determined, and the goodness of God did not think fit to oppose. And it is no wonder at all that he doth speak in this way to those men who came with curious questions and with evil purposes to ensnare him, as the lawyer did in this account of St. Luke.

Objection II. But can we suppose that Christ would deceive a young man, who came seriously to enquire the way to eternal life? Can we imagine that Christ, in whom dwells all wisdom, truth and love, should give such directions as could never bring a man to heaven, and especially considering that he came into the world on purpose to bring *life and immortality to light* among men, and to shew them the true way to heaven?

Answer I. That we may secure the goodness of God, and the mercy of Christ from any reproach in this case, I say further, that Christ did take a very wise and regular method with this young man to bring him to salvation, if he would have stayed to attend to it, and had not been full of evil prejudices, of self-righteousness, and the love of this

* See Section V. Reflection I.

world. For the first thing to be done in order to bring sinners to heaven, as I hinted before, is to *convince them of sin*, and this is done by the law. This the apostle Paul sheweth at large in his epistle to the Romans, that men by beholding the perfection of the law, and their inability to perform it, might become dead to all hope from the law, as he was when he says, Gal. ii. 19. *I by the law am dead to the law;* and that they might not expect life by the law, but that they might seek for salvation by the way of repentance and faith, or trust in Christ, and obtain forgiveness of sins through the free grace of God in the gospel.

Answer II. Though this young man had a vain conceit of his own righteousness, yet there was something in him naturally pleasing, agreeable and engaging, so that Christ as man "looked upon him and loved him;" *Mark* x. 21. He had some liking to such a towardly and hopeful youth, and preached the law to him, to convince him of sin, in order to his salvation: But when he professed himself to be so righteous in his own eyes, as to have kept all the commands of the law, his divine wisdom then saw it proper to put a harder trial upon him, viz. *to sell all that he had and give to the poor*, and to become a follower of Christ. Now if this young man had loved God so well as he pretended, and believed Christ to be a prophet come from God, he ought to have obeyed him, even in this difficult and self-denying command; which command was put upon him, partly to convince him that he did not love God so well as he imagined, and which hard trial probably would never have been put upon him, if he had not been so conceited of his own righteousness.

It must be observed also, to vindicate the honour, faithfulness and goodness of Christ, that if the young man had followed these directions of Christ at the end of the conference, he had been saved: Our blessed Lord gave him sufficient advice for eternal life, if he would have taken it. Come, *sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and follow me*, and be my disciple; and then it would follow, "Thou shalt learn of me the way to heaven more perfectly, and I will teach thee the way of repentance and faith, and holiness unto complete salvation." But the young man loved his money, and *went away sorrowful* that he could not keep all his riches and obtain eternal life too.

Objection III. Doth not God all along in the writings of the Old Testament, in successive ages, promise life in this same sort of language to those that observe and do his commandments, and that both by Moses and by the prophets? And did not the saints, under the Old Testament, obtain life this way? *Lev.* xviii. 5. *He that doth them*, that is, the commands of God, *shall live in them;* Ezek. xx. 11. this promise is repeated: And in *Ezek.* xxx. 15. *If the wicked walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die:* Now this dying cannot mean a natural death, for they knew they must die naturally; therefore it must mean a deliverance from eternal death, and assurance of eternal life. "It is therefore certain, that all pious persons, under the Old Testament, obtained a right to life eternal, by this observance of the moral precepts of the law." These are Doctor Whitby's own words.

Answer I. This life which is here promised in these texts to the Jews, in a literal sense, chiefly means long life in their own land, and peace and freedom from sorrows and miseries in this world: And though the freedom or preservation from death, which is promised by Moses to those who keep the statutes, laws and ordinances enjoined to Israel, does not mean an entire preservation from temporal death: so neither in the obvious and literal sense does it mean a security from eternal death, but rather a

freedom from death, as it is a general term used to include all temporal and painful evils, and particularly from sudden and violent death, from cruel, lingering and shameful death, from death in foreign countries, and untimely death in the midst of their years. This is very evident, if you read those expressions of Moses: *Duet.* vi. 24, 25. and *Duet.* xxx. 15—30. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 10—15. So Solomon, in his prayer; 1 *Kings* viii. 31—50. Nehemiah, in his prayer; *Neh.* ix. 29—31. teach us to explain it. Life is put for all that is good, and death for all that is evil. It is evident that God governed the Jews with regard to temporal blessings and temporal curses, in the way of a covenant of works. As to the external and temporal state of their persons, their church, and their nation, they were under a covenant of works; and God, who was their king or political head, dealt with them from time to time in saving them or in punishing them, according to their works: And it is very observable, that it is this very promise of life, upon condition of doing the works of the law which the apostle takes to describe that covenant of works, by which the Jews could not be saved as to their eternal state, see *Rom.* x. 3—5. and ix. 31. *The man that doth them shall live in them.*

If it be objected, that God allowed of their repentance for sin in this his law or covenant as their king, and sometimes he saved the nation upon their repentance, and therefore it must include the gospel or covenant of grace; yet I answer, it may still be called a covenant of works, because a mere external visible humiliation and reformation, without a real penitence at heart, was accepted by God as their king, as sufficient to divert divine judgments from the nation, and sometimes from particular persons, who had provoked God's anger by external and visible iniquities. 1 *Kings* xxi. 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself? I will not bring this evil in his days;* whereas all his humiliation was his "rending his clothes, wearing of sackcloth and fasting," and a little outward appearance of reformation, but it is evident that his heart was not changed. See 1 *Kings* xxii. 27.

It may be granted, indeed, there was much grace and mercy mingled in this political law or covenant of life, between God as a civil king, and Israel as his subjects in this world; but still this was not the gospel or covenant of grace and salvation, whereby the pious Jews were saved from the wrath of God, as their spiritual Lord and Ruler in the other world, and whereby they had their sins pardoned and were made partakers of eternal life; for the rites of the law could not cleanse the conscience from sin in the sight of God. *Heb.* ix. 9. and this leads me to the next answer:

Answer II. Besides the frequent charges which are given to the Jews to keep the commandments of God, in order to obtain life, we find also frequent calls to inward and hearty repentance of sin, to make their *hearts clean, to forsake their evil thoughts, to rend their hearts and not their garments,* and so trust in the pardoning mercy of God; and there are many promises of pardon to the penitent, and the favour of God to those that fear him and hope in his mercy in order to lead them to obtain the happiness of the other world and eternal life. See *Isaiah* lv. 7, 8. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon;* Psalm cxxx. 4—6. *There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared, Let Israel hope in the Lord; with the Lord is plenteous redemption. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.* One might transcribe many pages to this purpose out of Isaiah, Jeremiah

and David. This is more evangelical language, shewing the way for sinners to obtain salvation: This is *the gospel that was preached to them as well as to us;* Heb. iv. 2. And even to them was preached also the gospel of the Messiah, and the salvation of men by the Messiah the seed of Abraham; *Gal.* iii. 8. *Isaiah* liii. 5, 6. 11. *He was wounded for our iniquities: The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* And it is said: *Acts* x. 43. *To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive forgiveness of sins* through his name. Thus it plainly appears, that the mere keeping of the commands, as written in the moral law, was not the proper term or rule of their acceptance with God unto eternal life, under the Old Testament: For there is nothing of this doctrine of repentance and forgiveness, nor of the Messiah, contained in the ten commands.

Let it be observed also, that even in those legal promises which ensure life to those who kept the commands of God, there is a more spiritual and evangelical sense sometimes implied: For under this word life, and these temporal blessings which were promised, eternal life and eternal blessings were typified and held forth to those that looked through the veil, and that fulfilled the will of God in spiritual and sincere obedience, with a humble sense of their sins, and trust in divine forgiveness. But the ground of their acceptance with God unto eternal life, or their right to heaven and salvation, was not this their performance of the works of the law, for their best works were all imperfect, and they were *saved by faith even as we;* Gal. iii. 6—9. that is, by trusting to pardoning mercy, so far as it was revealed under that dispensation.

And as the salvation itself was typified by temporal blessings, so the way to this salvation, which was "repentance and trust in the mercy of God through the Messiah, was typified by offering sacrifices of blood, and by many washings and purifyings, both by blood and water, which implied a confession of their defilement:" And the saints or righteous men of that day, hoped for the mercy of God, as discovered more plainly in the promises, and perhaps also, some might understand it as hinted in these types and figures. They knew that "blessedness was to come upon men to whom God imputed not their sins, or to whom the Lord imputed righteousness;" *Psalm* xxxii. 1, 2. or accounted them as righteous in his sight by his mercy, though, they were very imperfect and far from righteousness, that is a perfect justifying righteousness, even if they put together all their works of obedience to the commands of God. David often speaks of the impossibility of our attaining the acceptance of God by our works; *Psalm* cxxx. 3. *If thou shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* Psalm cxliii. 2. *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* Psalm xiv. 3. *There is none righteous; no, not one.* Psalm xix. 12. *Who can understand his errors?* He seeks for pardon of sin by repentance and trust in the mercy of God; *Psalm* li. 1, 6, 10 and cxliii. 1, 2. And he pronounces the blessedness of those to whom God forgives their iniquities; *Psalm* xxxii. 1, 2. or to whom he imputes righteousness without works, as St. Paul explains him; *Rom.* iv. 6. and * this encouraged him to confess his sins, and repent of them, as in *Psalm* xxxii. 5, 6. and li. 3, 8, 9. and cxxx. 3. 4.

* And here, by the way, I would take occasion to relieve or explain one great difficulty, which occurs in the reading of St. Paul's epistles; especially those to the Romans and Galatians. It is evident that when St. Paul designs to represent the terms of the covenant of works, *viz. Do this and live;* Rom. x. 5. and *cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;* Gal. iii. 10. 12. he doth it by citations out of the Old Testament, or the jewish scriptures, because the language of the political covenant which God made with the

Thus it appears, that the bare keeping the commandments of the law was neither under the Old Testament nor the New, the way to salvation and eternal life for sinners: But since *the law was made weak*, and unable to save, by reason of the *weakness of our flesh* or sinful nature; *Rom.* viii. 3. that is, since the law promises life only to those who obey the commands perfectly, and men could not obtain life this way by reason of the imperfection of their obedience, there were many calls to repentance, and to trust in the mercy of God, given to the Jews, in the Old Testament, as the prescribed way for sinners to obtain salvation; which duties together with the grounds of them, and the blessings promised to them, are much more clearly revealed in the New Testament.

I might confirm these answers to Doctor Whitby, out of his own exposition on *Rom.* x. 9. "Justification, saith he, is here expressly ascribed to faith; and that not as including works, but only as being that principle which, when it is cordial and sincere, will certainly produce them: I say, "not as including all those works," which by the gospel are required to salvation, for then the righteousness of faith must be described as the righteousness of the law, *viz.* that *the man that doth these things shall live in them*, which is contrary to the words of the apostle," *verses 5, 6.* So far does the force of truth, in some places, constrain honest minds to admit and confess what in other places they are very unwilling to allow, and which they almost contradict: But this must be charged on the common or universal influence of human frailty and mistaken prejudices, and for want of an equal, uniform, simultaneous and comprehensive view of all the parts of religion together, which no human mind perhaps in the present state can arrive at.

Objection IV. There is another objection which may be started against my exposition of this text, that is drawn from *Rev.* xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city;* that is, into heaven, and enjoy eternal life. Surely, say some, these words must be acknowledged to be the language of the gospel, or the covenant of grace, and not of the law or the covenant of works: For they are the words of Christ himself, after his ascension to heaven, and yet it is plain that doing the commandments is here represented as the way to obtain eternal life in heaven.

Answer. But it is as plain that doing the commandments of the moral law are not the only things that are meant here in this text: But these commandments which give a right to the tree of life, &c. include at least, if not chiefly design, the peculiar commands of God in the gospel, *viz.* repentance of sin, faith in the pardoning mercy of God through a Redeemer, which is productive of love to God and man. To prove this, read Matt. iv. 17. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Mark i. 15. *Repent and believe the gospel.* Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth—shall be saved.* 1 John

Jews, as he was their king, and they were his nation or people, was the language of the covenant of works, and God governed them very much in that way with regard to their temporal rewards and punishments.

On the other hand, when St. Paul gives us the terms of the covenant of grace or the gospel, *viz.* "Faith in the grace of God through a Saviour," he also cites the Old Testament, or the jewish scriptures. So *Rom.* iii. 21. *Rom.* iv. 3, 6, 7. *Rom.* x. 6—11. *Gal.* iii. 8, 11. Because the covenant of grace, or the way of salvation and eternal life, was also prescribed, though in a more obscure manner, in the Old Testament, partly by promises made to repentance and trust in the mercy of God, and a Messiah that was to come, and partly by sacrifices and washings, which were types and figures of repentance and pardon, through the blood of Christ, and sanctification of the Spirit. Thus the righteousness of God was witnessed by the law and the prophets; *Rom.* iii. 21. I think without this clue it is impossible to read and understand the great apostle's way of arguing in those epistles. See more in the Harmony of all Religions that God ever prescribed; *chapters* v. and vi.

iii. 22, 23. *And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight: And this is his commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment.*

Now as Adam by doing the peculiar commands which God gave to him, might have obtained a right to the benefits of the literal tree of life in the garden of Eden, that is, immortality; so christians by doing the peculiar commandments of the gospel, may be said, in some sense, to obtain a right to the benefits of the spiritual tree of life, that is, Christ Jesus, and may enter into heaven; but a mere obedience to the commandments of the moral law is never prescribed as the way to obtain a right to the benefits of Christ, but rather an obedience to the commands of the gospel which are peculiarly repentance and faith in Christ.

It may be yet further observed, that the commands to which Christ directed the young man in my text, in order to enter into life, were not faith and repentance, but only the ten commands of the moral law: For he directs the young man precisely to the commands of the moral law, and tells him, "Thou knowest what these commands are." Now this young man was so full of his own obedience to that law, and so confident of it, that he seems not to know the commands of confession of sin and repentance for it; much less did he think of the other command of "faith in the mercy of God through a Mediator." So that if it be never so much allowed, that obedience to these humbling and self-abasing commands of the gospel, faith and repentance, may give a right to the benefits of Christ, and to an entrance into heaven, yet an obedience to the ten commands of the moral law could not make a sinner's way to heaven and eternal life: But these ten commands are those which Christ points out to the young pharisaical enquirer.

Upon the whole it appears, that when our Saviour saith to the young man in my text, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, he did not mean to give him the plain and direct prescription of the gospel in order to the salvation of a sinner, but rather began with him in preaching the law, in order to shew him his duty by the law, and to convince him of sin.

And from this view of things, I think we may draw this plain observation, *viz.* That wheresoever the keeping the commands of God is proposed to men in scripture as the way to life, it either means that the way to obtain long temporal life and temporal blessings was to observe the jewish laws, according to the political covenant of God made with the jewish nation at Sinai; or it means that perfect obedience of thought, word, and action to all these commands which God gives us, is the way to obtain life eternal by the covenant of works and law of innocency: Or if at any time the context plainly determines this phrase, "keeping the commandments," to signify the way to obtain salvation under the gospel, then the word "commands" must extend to include the evangelical commands of repentance for sin, and trust in the pardoning mercy of God through a Mediator.

And the reason is plain; for this is the great difference always observed between the law and gospel, or between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, *viz.* that the covenant of works or the law, teaches us to claim life as a debt by our own exact obedience to the commands of the law; but the covenant of grace or the gospel, teaches us humbly to seek for life or salvation by confession of sin and repentance, and by

depending on the free mercy of God, through a Mediator, for the forgiveness of sin and acceptance with God.*

SECTION IV.

OF WHAT USE IS IT TO KEEP THE LAW THEN?

BEFORE I proceed I would answer another objection or query or two, upon this subject, *viz.* "Of what use is the law of God in a christian country? Or what use is there of keeping the commandments of the moral law, if we are not to obtain eternal life by them?"

Let the first enquiry be answered first. "Of what use is the law of God in a christian country, where the gospel of Christ is preached?

Answer. It is to be feared there are several thousand souls in a christian nation, who make a general profession of the religion of the blessed Jesus, and yet have no serious sense of the things of God and religion in their hearts: And it is evident to daily observation, that in a land professing the gospel of Christ, there are multitudes who have abandoned all piety even in the form of it, as well as the practice and power thereof, and there are some who have lost even morality itself; now the law of God is needful to be maintained, and published in such a nation as this, to keep the sinful world in awe, and to preserve even wicked men from running to all excess of riot and iniquity, by pressing the commands of God always upon their consciences, and by setting before them the vengeance and curses of the law of God, which are due to sinners, to preserve the world from universal disorder and wickedness. If there were no such representations of the holiness and justice of God in the world, what shameful impieties against God, and most outrageous iniquities and villanies would be spread among the children of men: So that there would be no such thing as peace, and civility and honesty to be found in several places. The apostle Paul tells us; 1 *Tim.* i. 9, 10. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*

The holy apostle acknowledges, where the law of God is originally written in the heart, and a man is made righteous by a thorough sanctification of all the powers of nature as it is in heaven, there is no such need of the commands, threatenings, and terrors of the penal law, to keep men in the practice of obedience; their own innocent or renewed nature, their sincere and universal love to God, and to his law, will powerfully incline them to the practice of holiness, without the terrors and punishments from the hand of the blessed God, being always kept before their eyes.

* Here I would caution my readers to take notice, that I am not now debating that point, "In what manner the righteousness, atonement, or death of Christ is applied to us in order to our interest in forgiveness of sins, the justification of our persons, or our right to final happiness:" That is an argument of a different consideration from the present debate. All that I propose here to treat of, is to determine that obvious question, whether Christ is plainly and directly shewing a conceited young man the way of obtaining salvation according to the gospel or covenant of grace, when he says to him, *If thou wilt enter ento life, keep the commandments* of the moral law; or whether he is not rather leading him to conviction of sin, by preaching the law to him, that he may be better prepared and inclined to receive the salvation of the gospel.

It is true, there are some cases wherein the law of God may not be well known even to good men, or may be mistaken by them, and there may be need of special commands to discover what is our duty, and what is sin: But where the law is well known, the inward power of universal goodness in the soul, without these outward terrors, is made effectual to preserve holiness and obedience in the life. But perhaps you will then reply,

"Where there are true christians found, of what use is it for them to keep the law of God?" This is the second enquiry, and to this I would give several particular answers, besides the first and general one. In general I say then, it must be acknowledged, that there are so many remains of indwelling sin in the best of men, that fears and terrors of the punishments of God, have their use in this imperfect state, to prevent the soul from warping aside to sinful practices, under strong and special temptations. Such frail and imperfect creatures are we in this present state. I proceed now to give some particular answers to this question, "Of what use is it to keep the law?" and they are such as these:

Answer I. Though we are not saved from the punishment of hell, nor pardoned and accepted to eternal life and happiness in heaven, by virtue of our poor imperfect obedience, and keeping the commands of the moral law, yet we can never be saved without it: For our love to the law of God, and a hearty inclination to keep it, is a great part of the very salvation which the gospel provides for sinful men. Jesus Christ the Son of God is become our Saviour, not only to save us from God's wrath; 1 *Thess.* i. 10. but also *to save us from our sins;* Matt. i. 21. and Tit. ii. 14. *He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* We must be restored to the image of God as well as to his favour; now his image is all holiness.

Mankind by the fall have not only lost their original state of innocency and happiness, but their natural powers are corrupted, the mind, will, and passions are perverted, and defiled, and turned away from God, and from their duty to his law. Now it is one great design of the gospel to rectify these disorders in the nature of man: It is one of the promises of the gospel *that the law of God shall be written in our hearts;* Heb. x. 16. and one of the great offices and businesses of Christ, as a Saviour, is by all the methods of his grace and power, to reduce our hearts to the love of God and his law: *He is made sanctification to us* as well as redemption; 1 *Cor.* i. 30. So that for men to talk of being saved without love and obedience to the moral law of God, is to talk plain inconsistencies, or to affirm what natural reason can never allow, and what scripture and the gospel never designed; in short, it is to talk of being saved without salvation.

The moral law of God is of eternal obligation upon creatures: And it would be our constant duty to obey it, even if we could suppose there were no such future state, no such eternal life provided for men as the gospel reveals. It arises from the relation between God and his creatures. We can never be disengaged or released from this duty by the gospel, which brings in pardon and mercy to save us from the punishment due to our defects or transgressions of the law; but not to release us from obedience to it.

A holy God will not save sinners from hell, and forgive them their sins, without making them holy. Christ in all his abounding love to sinners, will not become *a minister of sin;* Gal. ii. 17—20. The design of God in his grace to sinners, by Jesus Christ, is, *that they might be holy and without blame before him in love;* Eph. i. 4.

And hereby we shew that the grace of God, in the forgiveness of sin, is not lost upon us but obtains the end for which it was designed, *viz.* to bring us back to God and holiness.

Answer II. "Good works are necessary to manifest our gratitude to God for his pardoning mercy:" These are our returns of love to the blessed Jesus for his dying love manifested to us; 2 *Cor.* v. 15. He died for all ranks and characters of men, Jews and gentiles, *that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again.* 1 *John* iv. 19. We are bound to love him, and *we do love him because he first loved us.* 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your body and spirit, which are God's.*

Answer III. "Good works are also necessary to render us useful to men, our fellow-creatures," and to make our profession honourable in their sight. Good works are recommended by St. Paul for the purpose; Tit. iii. 8. *This is a faithful saying, and I will that thou constantly affirm, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.* It is necessary to convince the world that our gospel is all holy, and that it indulges and allows of no known sin: That this gospel is a divine blessing to mankind, that it carries blessings with it wheresoever it comes, that it cures the vices of the mind, and the sinful passions of the heart, that it suppresses all injustice and cruelty, fraud and malice, envy and oppression, and every evil work which sin and Satan have introduced into this world. A christian must preach and prove the purity and power of his gospel in his whole conversation, that it changes a lion into a lamb, an earth worm into an angel, and a son of Adam into a child of God. This is the way to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*, as St. Paul expresses it; *Tit.* ii. 10. This must force a conviction upon the eyes, and ears, and consciences of men, that there is something divine and heavenly in our religion.

Answer IV. "Without holiness and good works we are not, nor can be conformable to our Lord Jesus Christ:" And yet all the members must be conformed to their head, when they are presented by him before the Father; *Rom.* viii. 29. God *has predestinated* all his children to be conformable to the image of his Son, that he may appear to be the first-born, and *in all things may have the pre-eminence.* He must present them *without spot and blemish*, like himself, in the other world, that they may dwell with him for ever. And in this world the disciples must resemble their Lord; christians should be public blessings to the world, as their Master was, *who went about doing good;* Acts x. 38. and they should be known to be his followers by this blessed character.

Answer V. Another use of good works is, "to evidence the truth of our faith, and our interest in this salvation;" *James* ii. 20, 24. For faith which does not produce good works is dead, and cannot save us. Our faith in Christ is made known to ourselves, as well as to the world, by our works; *Rom.* viii. 1. They who are in Christ Jesus, and are free from the condemnation of the law, must *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?* 1 John ii. 2—5. *Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments:* And it is by keeping or obeying his word, that we know we are in him.

Answer VI. Works of holiness, a new heart, and new obedience, are needful to fit and prepare us for the actual possession and blessedness of heaven, for *without holiness no man shall see God.* And in this view a sincere return to God with obedience

to his commands, is a necessary requisite, in order to our final salvation*; *Heb.* xii. 14. This blissful vision of God is reserved only for the *pure in heart;* Matt. v. 8. Sanctification is the beginning of our salvation, and it is eternally necessary to continue it. We can never be happy in the presence of God till we are like him in holiness. Nor can we be fit company for the holy angels, or the spirits of the just made perfect, unless we are conformable to their temper. And it should be observed also, that this preparation or fitness for heaven, may be sometimes represented as a right to the blessedness of it, because the promises of heaven are sometimes made to those who are thus qualified and prepared, and these promises give them a right to it.† Matt. v. 3—12. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,* &c. Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.* Yet it may be remembered what I said before, that these commandments do not signify directly the ten commandments of the law, but rather the commands of Jesus Christ, or of God in the gospel, which indeed include a sincere obedience to the moral law, and something more, *viz.* Repentance and faith in Christ.

Answer VII. I might add, in the last place, that holiness of life or obedience to the commands of God, is necessary in order to make the process of the last judgment appear equitable and righteous in the eyes of all mankind; for Christ the Judge *shall render to every one according to their works;* Rev. xxii. 12. Rom. ii. 5, 6. 1 Cor. xv. 58. And indeed this is one chief design of God's appointing such a solemn and public transaction as the last judgment, that all the creation may see the equity or righteousness of the dealings of God with men, that he awards the eternal recompence to saints and sinners, according to their different characters of vice and virtue, sin and holiness. *The vessels of wrath* are by their own rebellion and impenitence *fitted to destruction,* and *the vessels of mercy* are, by sanctifying grace and holiness, *before prepared unto glory;* Rom. ix. 22. 23. Though our own works are by no means sufficient to atone for sin; or to procure the favour of God or eternal life, for such guilty creatures as we are, yet there is, as Doctor Owen, I think in his Book of Justification, calls it, a rewardable condecency in the works of holiness, and there is many a promise of heavenly rewards made to them in the New Testament: Now when Christ shall adjudge the wicked to hell, and the saints to heaven, the whole creation must approve the equity of his dealings with men. In the mean time the saints shall admire the grace of God, and the mediation of Christ, while they see how unworthy they and their works are of such a glorious reward.

Thus we find there is abundant reason for our obedience to the commands of the moral law, though it is not made the proper condition, or prescribed term of our accept-

* Note, When I speak of good works, or works of holiness, as necessary toward our final salvation, or our complete possession of heavenly blessedness, I mean all the inward exercises of holy fear, and love, and hope, and obedience, and dependence, and patience in the heart, &c. as well as the outward performances of the acts of religion and righteousness in the life: But it must still be understood with this limitation, *viz.* They are necessary where there is time and room, opportunity and capacity for the performance of them; so that this doth not exclude infants from salvation, who are not capable of exercising the principles of grace: Nor doth it exclude dying penitents who have no space of time allowed them for living a life of holiness.

† Some divines have here distinguished, as I have elsewhere shewn, between a "Jus hæreditatis," or a right of heirship through faith in Christ, whereby we become the sons of God, and have a title to heaven, and a "Jus aptitudinis," that is, a right of fitness, whereby we are actually prepared, by sanctification and holiness, for the possession of this heavenly inheritance. He that is a heir by birth or by adoption, has a title to an estate or a crown; but he acquires a right to the actual possession, by being trained up for a fitness for it, at the time appointed, by him who is his natural father, or his adopter.

ance with God, and of obtaining happiness by the gospel; for it is only perfect obedience to these commands in thought, word, and deed, can give us a right to eternal life, according to the law. And yet a sincere endeavour after universal obedience to them, is one necessary requisite of our being approved by Christ at last, and our actual entrance into heaven, according to the gospel: Hereupon I am bold to affirm, that those persons whom all these reasons cannot draw to the sincere practice of holiness, may be sure they never believed in Christ, and are not partakers of the salvation of the gospel; for the great and necessary duty of christianity is *faith which works by love;* Gal. v. 6. The heart is purified by true faith; *Acts* xv. 9. And *faith without works is dead,* and is unable to save us; *James* ii. 20, 26.

SECTION V.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflection I. "It is a dangerous thing to mistake the great design of Christ's ministry here on earth." Let us learn from this discourse, that our Saviour often preached to sinners the gospel of grace and forgiveness, of repentance and faith in himself; yet that his chief business here, was not to preach the gospel constantly, nor to preach it in its full light, perfection and glory; but rather to prepare the way for it when he had laid the foundation in his own death and resurrection, and when his kingdom should be set up in the world by his apostles, and by his Spirit, and built upon this foundation. He prepared the way for his Spirit, and his apostles, even as John the baptist prepared the way for him.

The great business of Christ in this life on earth, was to appear with the characters of the Messiah on him; to answer the types and prophecies that went before concerning him; to pass through the stages of life without sin as our example; to yield a perfect obedience to the law, and fulfil all those precepts in perfection which we could never fulfil; to preach the law in the spirituality and perfection of its demands, and begin to open the gospel; to resign and submit himself to death, as a sacrifice for sin, accursed by the law, and devoted to the punishing justice of God: And hereby he laid a foundation for clearer preaching the gospel of forgiveness of sins through his blood, which doctrine he just mentions to his disciples at the last supper.

As for his own public preaching, it chiefly consisted in clear and full explications of the law of God in its spirituality, which had been shamefully obscured and curtailed by the jewish doctors; in bringing the invisible worlds of heaven and hell into a nearer and brighter view; in vindicating his own conduct against the accusations of men; in maintaining his own character, as one sent of God; in reproving the Jews for their corrupt traditions, for their hypocrisy, for their self-righteousness, for their uncharitableness to the gentiles, and thus calling the world to conviction of sin and repentance, and preparing the way by his parables for the reception of the gentiles into the church. When he preached the gospel of his atonement for sin and faith in his blood, it was rather in secret to his disciples; or if in public, it was generally in dark sayings and parables, and mystical expressions, such as, *the son of man being lifted up* and *drawing all men to him;* John xii. 32. giving his *flesh* for *meat* to the people, and his *blood* for *drink,*—chapter vi. 51—55. The plainest intimations, which, I think, Christ ever gave

of the salvation of sinners by his own death as a sacrifice, to people who were not his disciples, was in those metaphorical words two or three times repeated in the tenth chapter of John, *I am the good shepherd*, who *giveth his life for the sheep;* verses 11, 14, 15. But when his death and resurrection had laid a fairer foundation for the gospel, then he taught it his disciples much more plainly after his resurrection, both by his conversation and by his Spirit, and sent them to publish it to the whole world more gloriously than ever he himself taught it to the Jews. See this explained more at large in the Second Sermon on the Atonement of Christ.*

Now, I say, a mistake in the design of Christ's public preaching, may lead many people into some unhappy mis-apprehensions about several things, and particularly about the way of salvation by the gospel. For,

1. When we hear Christ preach the law so much, and speak of "entering into life by keeping the commandments," if we imagine all this to be the clear gospel, *we shall seek to be saved* as it were *by the works of the law*, which the apostle so severely reproves the Galatians for, and the Jews or jewish christians, who dwelt among the Romans; *Rom.* ix. 31, 32. *Gal.* iii. 1—6. and iv. 21. and. v. 4. And if our opinions and conduct be the same, we shall expose ourselves to the same sacred reproof of the apostle, and be greatly bewildered in the way to heaven.

2. Such a mistake in the design of Christ's preaching the law, as though he taught it as the way for the salvation of sinners, "will incline us to expound the law in so gross and defective a sense, as the pharisees did of old, that so expounded, sinners may be able to keep it, and obey the commands of it sufficiently to gain salvation thereby." It will tempt us to retrench and diminish the perfection of its demands of universal holiness in thought, word and deed; because otherwise we cannot yield a perfect obedience. Whereas it is much more glorious to God, the Governor of the world, to suppose his holy law still maintains its own perfect purity, and its original demands of constant universal obedience; and it is more glorious to God our Saviour, to suppose that he has provided an effectual way for the salvation of sinful creatures, who trust in divine mercy, and who love the law of God, though their best obedience to it be very defective.

3. "Such a mistake will lead ministers to neglect the mention of the death and sufferings of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, and as the foundation of our pardon and our hope;" it will lead them to omit these important points in their descriptions of the gospel, and in their accounts of faith in Christ; because Christ never spoke so publicly and plainly to the people, of making atonement for sin by his death, &c. And upon this account we shall be in danger of leaving this doctrine out of our directions of sinners when they seek the way to salvation, which is now made plainer and more necessary since the death and resurrection of Christ are accomplished, since the apostles have particularly explained this doctrine, and the New Testament is complete.

4. "This mistake will tempt us to set Christ and his apostles at variance about the way of salvation." Christ says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments:" And the apostles say, "The law is the ministration of death, but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; and we are justified by faith without the works of the law," &c. And thus we shall make the holy scripture contradict itself: Or if we endeavour to accommodate and reconcile these seeming oppositions,

* See Vol. I. pages 371—383.

upon a supposition that Christ, in the language of my text, preached the gospel, it can never be done, with fairness and justness of thought, without straining the words of scripture from their natural sense; and it will ever bring a darkness upon the distinction between the law and gospel, and leave the way of salvation by the gospel, under much confusion.

5. "This will tempt and incline us to expound the clear gospel, which we find in the writings and preachings of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, after the death and resurrection of Christ, by one of the legal expressions of our Saviour," when in his own life-time he preached the law for the conviction of sinners: We shall interpret the words and language of the gospel into the sense of the law of works: We shall almost explain away the covenant of grace, and make a covenant of works of it: And thus, perhaps, expose ourselves to the danger of St. Paul's censure, and "anathema," by "preaching another gospel, or perverting the gospel of Christ;" *Gal.* i. 8.

6. "This mistake will lead us to slight and despise the writings of the apostles, as though they never did nor could preach the gospel so clearly as Christ himself;" whereas they were really designed and sent forth after the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, to preach the full gospel to the nations in clearer and stronger language than Jesus himself ever did to the multitude; they were instructed and commissioned to publish the way to salvation by Christ, in a brighter and more explicit manner and expression, than his divine wisdom thought proper to do before he had actually died and rose again, by which transactions he laid the foundation for preaching the gospel more clearly and perfectly.

A mistake about the personal ministry of Christ, in such passages as this in my text, will make us look upon the glorious and evangelical paragraphs in the sermons and the epistles of Peter, Paul and John, as mere affectionate and fervent pieces of discourse, according to the warm temper and lively fancies of those honest and zealous men, who in the heat of their spirits spoke many things mystically and unintelligibly. This hath been the professed opinion of some who are called christians concerning the great apostle; and upon this account they think none of his writings are to be read without great caution: But if you will seek the way of salvation aright, say they, you must go to the mount, and hear our Saviour's sermon there, in the v. vi. and vii. *chapters* of the gospel of St. Matthew, while they neglect the more evangelical speeches even of Christ himself. This has been the language of some men, the leaders of the consciences of the ignorant multitude, who are by nature inclined enough to a covenant of works, and need not be taught and persuaded to build all their hopes of heaven upon the works of the law, which Christ never designed in that noble and admirable sermon of his on the mountain.

But now if we suppose Christ frequently preaching the law, on purpose to shew the Jews the grossest defects and imperfection of their obedience, and their need of a Saviour, and giving such hints of the gospel as were suited to that dispensation of his life and personal ministry; and if we suppose the apostles more fully preaching this gospel, which our Saviour just opened and begun in his life-time, and publishing it in all its glory of righteousness and grace, after the death and resurrection of Christ, because it was not proper to be thus clearly preached before, then we may well reconcile the different language of St. Paul and of Christ, when one saith, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; *Acts* xvi. 31. and the other, If thou wilt enter into life,

keep the commandments; *Matt.* xix. 17. It is certain that the law is not against the promises, *Gal.* iii. 21. but the "law is our school-master," and leader of us as children to Christ: So the Greek word παιδάγωγος means, *Gal.* iii. 24. Conviction of sin by Christ's preaching of the law, leads men, as in a lower school, as yet, to proceed farther, and to seek for and embrace the grace of Christ in the gospel, as it is preached more fully and clearly by his apostles under the teachings of his Spirit.

This scheme and view of things being well adjusted in the mind, will help us to understand many of those legal expressions in the New Testament, which might seem to lead us to the covenant of works again, or which seem to mingle the law and gospel for salvation, if we will but remember that the Holy Ghost in the New Testament sometimes discovers the law in its severity and perfection of demands for the conviction of sin, as well as for the discovery of our duty, and sometimes reveals the gospel in the riches of its grace, for the faith and salvation of awakened sinners.

Reflection II. "How firm and durable is the ancient and perfect law of God, which requires perfect, constant and persevering obedience?" It is an eternal law: It is not yet abolished, though the gospel be introduced, nor shall it be through all the ages of mankind, and the several dispensations of God toward men. The moral law is sometimes said to be a transcript or copy from the nature and attributes of God; the duties there required bear the more perfect stamp and signature of his essential perfections, and therefore the law must be unchangeable. And not only the requirements of duty, but I think the sanctions of the law also in its promised rewards and threatened penalties are everlasting. "He that doth these commands perfectly shall live in or by them: But cursed is he that continueth not in all the commands of the law to do them," and he must die, *Gal.* iii. 10, 12. I do not find any scripture that tells me that the commands, or the sanctions are repealed*, though God hath provided a way to deliver men who receive the gospel and enter into God's new covenant from the bondage of the law, as a covenant of works, and to release and free repenting sinners from this cursed death, to deliver them from this sentence of condemnation, and to bestow on them the blessings of eternal life.

It is granted indeed, as the apostle confesses; *Rom.* viii. 3. That through the weakness of our flesh, the law is become weak and unable to save sinners; because their cor-

* If it should be said, that the apostle in *Heb.* vii. 18. says, "there is verily a disannulling of the commandment for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, for the law made nothing perfect," &c. I answer, that the context plainly shews that the words "law" and "commandment" here, do not mean the moral law, but refer either to the Sanai covenant, or the whole scheme of the jewish œconomy, and particularly to the levitical priesthood, which is abrogated, because it could not make a proper atonement for sin.

If it should be objected yet again, that the same apostle in *Rom.* vii. 6. declares, that "we are now delivered from the law, that being dead in which we were held;" and that the law in this place means the ten commandments, because the apostle argues from the tenth command, "Thou shalt not covet:" I answer, that the apostle there plainly means, that now under the gospel we who are true christians, and are entered into the covenant of grace by faith, are delivered from the bondage and chains of the law, as a covenant of works, whereby our indwelling sins were rather irritated and provoked than subdued: "It is dead," that is, it has lost its unhappy influences on true believers: But not that the law itself is abolished, either as a rule of life to christians, or as a condemning covenant of works to those who are not entered into the new covenant or state of grace, by faith and repentance: For he adds, *verse* 12. that even now "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good."

If this might be explained by a similitude, I think it is much in the same manner as the penal laws against the protestant dissenters in England, are not abolished, but stand in force still: Yet they have no power to hurt any person who accepts of the act of toleration, and qualifies himself accordingly: Though indeed there is this difference, that it can never be said, that those penal laws are now, or ever were, either "holy, just or good," as the law of God is.

rupt nature and fleshly inclinations render them unable to keep it perfectly; but, as I intimated before, it is not weak in its own nature to give life. Christ in my text preached the law, and says, "If thou keep the commandments," that is, with a persevering constancy, and a sinless perfection, "thou shalt enter into life:" What Christ speaks is true. If any man appear who hath been guilty of no sin, and hath fulfilled the law of God in every tittle of it in thought, word, and deed, he shall have eternal happiness. *Rom.* ii. 7. They who seek for glory, honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well doing, ἐν ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ, in one good work, without intermission or interruption by any sin, they shall have eternal life. This is the language of the law of works. But our incapacity to fulfil this law in our fallen state, hath awakened the compassion of God to provide a gospel of grace and pardon, and to send his Son Jesus Christ down from heaven to earth for this very purpose, that humble, repenting, returning sinners, who trust in the mercy of God through a Mediator, might be saved, even while they cannot fulfil the perfect demands of this pure and holy law, though they sincerely endeavour it.

The great and blessed God maintains his holy law still in its own perfection and glory, though we have lost our practical or moral power of obeying it perfectly: I say, we have lost, by our fall in Adam, our moral or practical power of perfect obedience to the law; but our natural powers of understanding, will and affections remain, and there is no other natural power or faculty required, in order to obey it. And since our natural powers remain, the Great God requires perfect obedience of us, and all men to his holy law, and yet he assures us by his gospel, that he will not inflict the curse of the law on those who heartily repent of their sins, and trust in Christ, though they do not or cannot yield perfect obedience to this law.

He doth not lessen or diminish the demands of his law, which requires perfection still; for his nature is too pure to require only an imperfect obedience. If God under the gospel, had quite laid aside, or abolished his law, and required or commanded no more than such a sincere imperfect obedience, or such good works which converted and pious men perform, then they would fulfil the requirements or commands of God, and would have no sin, and such persons would need no pardon. But this is contrary to the whole tenor of the New Testament. "If we say we have no sin, we make God a liar, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" 1 *John* i. 10. The law of God is eternal, and demands perfect obedience of every creature: But his grace pardons those who cannot come up to the perfect demands of this law, by reason of the moral impotence contracted by the fall, if they apply themselves to Jesus Christ his Son, according to the rules of the gospel.

The law therefore is holy, and just, and good, and will be so to all generations; *Rom.* vii. 12. and when our Saviour was beginning his divine and admirable exposition of it on the mount, he warns us in *Matt.* v. 17, 18. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil: For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" and our Lord Jesus Christ has put honour upon his Father's law several ways:

1. He preached and explained it in the glorious purity and perfection of it.

2. He fulfilled it all himself in most exact obedience, and thereby set all his followers an admirable example how to fulfil it.

3. He suffered death for the dishonour we had cast upon it by our sins, not to destroy the sanction of it, but to free us from the curse.

4. He hath taken all the rules or commandments of it into the scheme of his gospel, as divine rules and directions for the constant practice of believers, and obliges them to obey it with their utmost care and endeavour, though he hath taken away from them that curse and condemnation, which originally belongs to every degree of disobedience.

5. He sends his own Holy Spirit continually to write this law in the hearts of his people, and to form and mould their souls to a delightful conformity to the rules of it.

Thus it appears, that Christ Jesus himself and the very scheme of the gospel doth confirm and not abolish the law; *Rom.* iii. 31. The law is everlasting, and the gospel doth not destroy it, while yet it relieves guilty creatures from the deserved penalties.

Reflection III. "How useful is it to meditate and study, to preach and explain the law of God, and that not only for the direction of our life and actions, but also for the same end that our Saviour preached it in my text to this young man, *viz.* to convince of sin." So *Rom.* iii. 20. By the law is the knowledge of sin. *Rom.* iv. 15. The law, worketh wrath; it sheweth to the consciences of men the wrath of God, which is due to sin, and therefore saith the apostle, I by the law am dead to the law; *Gal.* ii. 16, 19. By considering and studying the purity, the extent and perfection of the law of God, I am dead to all expectation of righteousness and life by it, for I see I cannot fulfil its pure and perfect demands, and therefore I fly to the gospel as my only refuge and hope.

We must be made sensible of our guilt of sin, our liableness to death and misery, and our incapacity to save ourselves by the law, that we may fly to the gospel of grace. We must be wounded by the law that we may seek and find healing by the gospel. The law impressed on the conscience is an excellent preparative for the gospel of forgiveness; for sinners that are not awakened to a sense of sin and danger, will not hear the sweet invitations of the Saviour. Dare not charge and censure those as legal preachers, who frequently preach the law of God in its demands and in its curses: There is abundant use of preaching the law, for many excellent purposes under the dispensation of the gospel: Jesus himself is our pattern.

Reflection IV. "How happy are we who live under the clear and complete light of the gospel, as it is explained and illustrated by the inspired apostles, since the death and resurrection of our blessed Saviour." We are happier in several respects, than those that lived even in the life-time of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are ready to say within ourselves, Surely if I had seen Christ in the flesh, I must have loved him: If I had beheld his pure and perfect example of holiness, I could not help imitating: If I had heard him speak as never man spake, I must have embraced his doctrine, and submitted to his instructions: But we are much mistaken in this thought, for we might have been carried away from Christ by the common national prejudices against him, we might have been among the proud pharisees, building up a righteousness of our own, and refusing the gospel, while we heard Jesus himself preach it. Multitudes who heard this glorious preacher rejected his divine counsels, and perished in their unbelief and disobedience, though they had as good an opinion of themselves as we have.

Besides many other advantages that we have now, beyond what they had in the days

of Christ; besides the many predictions and promises that are since accomplished, which confirm his mission; besides the explication of a greater part of the Old Testament, by the apostles, than could have been done before the death of Christ; besides the many proofs of the christian religion, which we derive from the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the arguments drawn from the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which could never have been brought in our Saviour's life-time, we have this advantage also among others, that we have the gospel set in a clearer light by his apostles, in their sermons and epistles, than our Saviour himself set it in, by his own personal ministry.

That divine teacher explained the law clearly, and set the commands of it in their full light and beauty, partly to lead us to a more spiritual practice than the pharisees, and the jewish doctors of the law were acquainted with, and partly to shew our utter incapacity of keeping the law, or obtaining eternal life by it: He also began to publish the gospel of grace, repentance and forgiveness; but, as was declared before, his sovereign wisdom did not think proper publicly to explain and illustrate this gospel of forgiveness with the doctrine of his own sacrifice, his death, his atonement for our sins, his resurrection for our justification, his intercession for us in heaven, and his ruling the world for the good of his people; He left all this to be done by his apostles, when the Spirit should come down upon them and teach them many things which they could not bear in his life-time, and which therefore he did not clearly teach them; *John* xvi. 12.

Value therefore and love the gospel, and return not to the law of works, as the means or rule of your justification; *Gal.* iv. 21. Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law, how it curses every sinner, and condemns them all without remedy and without hope? It is the business of sinners to fly to and live upon this gospel of forgiveness, and not seek to establish their own imperfect righteousness before God. Rejoice in the way of justification by the obedience, death and resurrection of the Son of God in flesh. Never hope to obtain pardon of sin, and to secure the salvation which Christ has revealed, by your own keeping the commandments of the law, for your best righteousnesses are all very defective and insufficient: But repent of sin, trust in Christ, and live upon atoning blood and pardoning grace, while you humbly seek after the highest degrees of holiness and conformity to the commands of the law. By this means you shall magnify the law of God, and make it honourable in the sight of men, even while your hope of salvation and eternal life is entirely owing to the rich grace of God in the gospel of his Son Jesus: *To him that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, to him that has redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse* and a sacrifice *for us, be glory, honour and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

It is proper to put in a remark here, which perhaps would have been better placed at the end of the first essay, *viz.* That that ingenious commentator Doctor Whitby, was well known to the learned world, when he wrote his Comment on the New Testament, to be a pretty warm defender of the arminian doctrines concerning the will of man and divine grace, &c. though at the same time he was a zealous opposer of the socinian sentiments concerning the person of Christ, and a strict and zealous asserter of the doctrine of his satisfaction and atonement for sin, and probably he borrowed some of his sentiments on that point from Doctor Owen, on the epistle to the Hebrews. In his latter days, a little before his death, he seemed to raise the character of the human nature of Christ as high as the arians, do, but supposed it still below divinity.

ESSAY IV.

THE MISTAKEN WAYS OF COMING TO GOD WITHOUT CHRIST.

JOHN XIV. 6.

NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME.

IF the race of man were immortal on earth, and sinners were never sommoned to die, or if they could put an eternal end to their souls when the body lies down in the dust, there would be little concern among us, *How shall I come and appear before God?* or "What shall I do to obtain his favour?" Sinful creatures seem to live well enough among the cares or amusements of this life, though they are *without God in the world;* and if they could live for ever without seeing him, or could plunge into death and the unseen world, and not meet him there, they would take no thought about that grand enquiry, which Balak the king of Moab thought to be of such importance, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the high God?* Micah vi. 6. But when the consciences of men begin to be convinced that they are transgressors against the law of their Maker, and that they must one day appear before him, as their Governor and their Judge, and answer for their conduct, then they enquire in good earnest, "What they shall do to stand in his sight with acceptance, or to draw near his Majesty without terror?" Then reason and nature exert all their forces to find an answer to this grand question. But nature and reason darkened and weakened by the fall of man, and unassisted by revelation and divine grace, lead them into many mistaken ways, such as will never bring them into the favour of him who made them, nor obtain true happiness. Poor foolish and fallen mankind is ready to try many means of procuring eternal life for themselves, before they will betake themselves to the one only way which God has appointed by his gospel, and that is, faith in Jesus Christ.

Of the several mistaken ways that sinners are ready to choose in this case, these three are the chief, *viz.* The way of supposed innocency, The way of dependence on God's general goodness, and the way of their own repentance and self-righteousness. Let us consider each of these and enquire into the justness of their pretensions:

I. *First,* "the way of innocency." How many souls are there in such a land as this, who come to God with a thoughtless confidence, and expect to find mercy at his hands, though they are conscious they have not done so much good as they ought, nor have been so religious as they should be? Yet they think they are harmless and have done no wrong, and therefore they are safe for eternity. Perhaps, by education and other methods of restraining grace, they have escaped the viler pollutions of the age, and been preserved from gross impieties: Then they hope and believe all shall go well with them, and dream of nothing but the favour of God, and happiness after death, because their life has been outwardly unblamable in the world. Thus they live, and thus they die. Ask these persons when they lie languishing on a dying pillow, "How they can venture to appear before the great, the just, and the holy God, in the world of spirits?" They will readily return this answer, "They have done no harm, and they

hope God will do them none; they have wronged no man, and they know not why they should not be accepted of God." Poor ignorant, unthinking creatures! One would wonder that so gross blindness and stupidity should remain on the minds of any who sit under the preaching of the law and gospel. Let me endeavour to convince such sinners here, and prove that this hope is a false and dangerous one.

1. If it were possible that they should be found such as they suppose themselves, that is, innocent in their outward carriages and actions toward their fellow-creatures, yet have their language and their lips been always innocent too? Or if they have in the main learned to bridle their tongues from gross falsehood, and wrath, and slander, yet have they never indulged evil imaginations against their neighbour, and the working of evil passions? Sirs, if we construe the law of duty to extend to our hearts, as well as to our lips and our lives, as our Saviour has construed it in his sermon on the mount, *Matt. chapters* v. and vi. and vii. who is there can ever plead innocence? You have kept your actions to all appearance tolerably blameless, with regard to men, but have you never broken the last command of the second table, never been desirous or covetous of another's possessions in thought, never been guilty of immoralities in heart? Can such souls plead at the bar of God, that they never allowed one envious thought against their neighbour, and never let loose a malicious word? That they never coveted that which belonged to another, nor wilfully lessened their neighbour's good name or reputation? Did they never find wrath or revenge kindling and burning within them without resistance? Did they never indulge the motions of lust or intemperance, or any sinful desire stirring in their hearts? When the great apostle, in the second and third chapters to the Romans, is convincing all the world of sin, and laying mankind under a sense of guilt, he convinces them effectually by their breach of the second table, that *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;* Rom. ii. 21. and iii. 10, 12—20.

Where is the son or daughter of Adam that can stand forth and say, I never dishonoured father or mother, nor ever disobeyed the just commands of my superiors; I never was unreasonably angry against another; I never encouraged a wanton thought within me, nor indulged any covetous and sinful wish; I never broke the rule of temperance in eating and drinking, nor ever gave way to an irregular passion. I never was guilty of known falsehood, in design or in word. Let mankind take but these laws of God, which regard themselves and their neighbours, and make a sincere examination of themselves thereby, and their own consciences will soon condemn the very best of them in the sight of God. They are all condemned by the law of innocence, and if they have no better plea, they will meet with an offended and angry God, in whose sight no sinner can stand and find acceptance. His law is wise and righteous, and every violation of it deserves a proportion of punishment.

Perhaps they will plead after such a strict enquiry, that though they have not been perfectly innocent, yet their offences have not been gross and constant; but only of the smaller kind and few in number, and therefore they hope for excuse; but the apostle James takes away this hope also, when he tells us; *James* ii. 8, 10. *Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,* for by one wilful sin he abuses that governor and affronts that authority by which all the commands are enjoined. Nor is any wilful sin small in the sight of divine justice, for it is the fruit of a presumptuous heart, and is therefore highly criminal.

But suppose after their own review of their behaviour, they should pronounce them-

selves quite innocent, and say boldly, *they knew nothing by themselves; yet they are not* sufficiently *justified hereby*, for God sees the heart, and he knows us better than we know ourselves. 2 *Cor.* vii. 2. and 1 *Cor.* iv. 4. *Receive us, saith* St. Paul, *we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man; for though I know nothing by myself*, that is, nothing of fraud or deceit, or wilful injury, *yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. The eyes of God are a flame of fire*, and will find iniquity where I can find none, for he sees all the disguises and veils of self-love and self-flattery, whereby every man is naturally prone to cover his sins, and to impose upon himself. He beholds those secret ferments, those hidden operations and motions of sin in the soul, which pass by unnoticed to ourselves, and escape the accusation and charge of our consciences. He knows so perfectly all the just demands of his own law, in the lengths and the breadths thereof, and is so perfectly acquainted with all the motions of our hearts, all their follies and passions, and sinful biases, that he can find in us a thousand contrarieties to his law, where we are fondly ready to presume upon our own innocence. Should I say with Job, chapter ix. verse 30. *If I should wash myself in snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, thou wilt plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes would abhor me.* That is, if I should use all my own purifications, thou wilt discover me to be still as greatly defiled with sin, as one who is plunged into a ditch, and is unfit to put on his common raiment, lest he defile that and every thing about him.

Alas, how little do men believe this? How little do they know and think of their own guilt in the sight of God, and the depth of their own misery! How are they led by their own thoughtlessness and shameful ignorance of themselves to build their hopes for eternity on a very sandy foundation, which will never stand in the day of that divine tempest, which shall try every man's work? You imagine, God will not be so strict a judge, and so severe, as preachers represent him; but how do you know that he will not be thus severe in his enquiries and his judgment? I am well assured the mere light of nature can never assure you of it, nor secure you against this severity: And the scripture often represents him thus severe in his judgment, formed by the rules of his own law, and abstracted from the gospel of his grace. David knew this in ancient times; *Psalm* cxxx. 3. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities; O Lord, who can stand.* Psalm cxliii. 2. *No man living shall be justified in thy sight.* All mankind are sinners; *There is none righteous; no, not one: Every mouth is stopped, and the whole world lies guilty before God;* Rom. iii. 19.

2. If we were entirely innocent as to man, would that be sufficient to answer for all our injuries and dishonours done to God? Would this honest and blameless conduct among your neighbours, atone for all your neglects of religion, and your shameful forgetfulness of God your Maker? What! Did God send you into this world among sensible things, and give you leave to neglect him, who is the eternal and almighty Spirit? Did he form your spirits within you, and give you understanding and reason, and noble powers to know the God that made you, and never require or expect that you should use them to obtain this knowledge? Have you a tongue to speak, and yet never speak to him in petition or praise? It is not only cruelty, or falsehood, or injustice to our neighbours, which the holy apostle charges mankind with in order to lay their consciences under guilt and condemnation, but their neglects of God and religion are brought in as a heavy part of the charge; Rom. iii. 11, 17, 18. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; there is no fear of God before their eyes.* You hear the accu-

sations of this apostle, speaking in the name of God to men, to make them sensible of their guilt and misery; you have defrauded the great God of his due glory; you have done him much injury in withholding from him worship and reverence, fear and love, prayer and praise; and you fall under the sentence of his broken law for ever, if you have no better plea than this.

Under such a charge multitudes would be ready to rise up, and with a thoughtless and inconsiderate pertness would say, "Far be it from us to injure our Maker when we would not injure or wrong a worm:" And this is the common sentiment and language of neighbours and friends when a man dies, even though he were a drunkard or a man of irreligion. "Alas, for him! poor man! he has been honest and just; his soul is at rest, he never did any body an injury but himself." When such sinners are charged with neglect of religion, they cry out as though they were falsely accused, as those Jews do in *Mal.* iii. 8. when God complains of them, *Ye have robbed me, saith the Lord;* but they replied with impudence and ignorance, *Wherein have we robbed or wronged thee?*

"Alas, sirs, you are far from innocence in this respect; for you have robbed God of your hearts and best affections; you have robbed him of your thoughts and serious meditations; you have robbed him of your highest love and chief delight. Were all the passions of your souls and powers of nature given you to be employed about the trifles of this world? Doth not God, in the person of divine wisdom, call to men in the book of Proverbs, *My son give me thy heart;* Prov. xxiii. 26. And hath not the world had these hearts of yours given up to it entirely? Doth not the light of nature, as well as our Saviour, say, *Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and your whole soul, with all your mind, and all your strength?* Mark xii. 30. And hath God had all his share of love from you? What time have you ever spent in his service, in secret transactions between God and your own souls? What seasons have you taken for prayer to him, or for speaking his honours? and yet our time is all his: And though he gives us sufficient portions of time for all our necessaries and conveniences of life, yet have you not robbed God of much of your time in neglecting religion so entirely as you have done? Have you lived upon the Lord as your delight and your life? Have you made him your hope and your all? Have you daily expected all your comforts and blessings from him, and have you returned all the fruits of your blessings back again to him in a way of thankfulness and obedience? Surely your consciences must answer, no: Then believe it and be afraid; *you have robbed God,* you have injured the Almighty, you are far from innocency, and you must expect to perish with malefactors, if you have no better plea than this. O dismal change of apprehensions, when God shall make creatures, who thought they were innocent, appear abominable in his sight, guilty of atheism and irreligion and high ungodliness, and shall judge and sentence and punish them as criminals of a deep die, for *God was not in their thoughts, they lived without God in the world!* Psalm. x. 4. Eph. ii. 12.

"Dare not therefore, O sinners, dare not continue one day longer in this practice: Renounce and abandon your false and foolish hopes: Walk no longer in this vain, this dangerous, this supposed way of innocency, for it will never bring you to God and his favour. Nor go on to think yourself fit for heaven, because you imagined you had done no wrong on earth, for upon a serious search you must be convinced in your consciences, that you have been evident transgressors against the law of God, both in regard of the duties of religion and morality, in what you owe both to God and man; and innocency

will be found a false and vain plea at the bar of God." But I will go one step further in making it appear with abundant evidence, that the way of pretended innocency can never bring such creatures as we are into the favour of God; and that is, by enquiring of such as call themselves christians; what is the use of christianity, and why was it brought into the world? Surely, if innocence had been the way to heaven, Christ Jesus the Son of God would never have come into flesh and blood, that he might die for us; God would never have sent so glorious and divine a person to have exposed himself to so many infirmities and sorrows, fatigues and sufferings among the wretched inhabitants of this our globe, if we could have been saved in the way of innocence. Never would the Son of God have entered our world to have been driven out of this mortal life again by cruel and bloody men; nor sustained the shame, the pangs and agonies of the cross, and a cursed death. There would have been no new religion introduced by him; there would have been no gospel, for there needed none if we are saved by innocence. The coming of the Son of God into our world, his painful circumstances of life, and his atoning death at the end of them, sufficiently prove, that the law of innocency can never save mankind.

The covenant or law of innocence was broken by our first parents; our natures are corrupted, and this law or covenant is for ever weak, and unable to bring us to God again. Rom. viii. 3. *What the law was not able to do in that it was weak through the flesh, Jesus Christ* came to do for us, by coming in the flesh, and *making his soul an offering for sin.* "If after all this representation of things you are resolved to continue in this way, and seek eternal life in the way of innocence, you give a sensible affront to the Son of God, who came down from heaven to bring sinners near to God, and you say in effect, he might have spared his journey to earth to shew us the way to heaven, or to provide a new way for us, for we have done no harm to God or man here in this world, and therefore God will not condemn or hurt us in the other. O my friends, beg of God to convince you deeply of sin, and that there is no hope by all your pretences of this kind."

II. The second mistaken way of coming to God is "by a mere dependence on the absolute and sovereign goodness of his nature," while you neglect the particular methods of salvation which you hear and read he has appointed in the book of his grace. It is true, *his tender mercies are over all his works;* Psalm cxlv. 9. and men imagine this eternal love to his creatures will not suffer him to make any of them miserable hereafter, for what they call a little misconduct here: And while they lessen their own sins, and enlarge upon his goodness, they venture their souls upon an unsafe foundation, and build up a dangerous and ungrounded hope. "Fancy his goodness, O sinners, as large and glorious as you will, and I may venture to affirm it yet larger and more glorious than your fancy; but if all your hopes rest here, and you walk onward in this confidence, you will never see the face of God with comfort; nor arrive at his favour." Remember this is spoken particularly, and only, to those who have known and heard the gospel of Christ, and yet have neglected to receive it.

Yet how common a mistake is this, even among those who are called by the christian name? Many will confess, "We are sinners indeed, and so are all men; but God is infinitely merciful, and he will not damn us: Surely he will never condemn so many millions of souls? he did not make mankind to destroy them; his goodness will not bear to see us eternally miserable, and therefore though we do indulge a little sin here, we

shall not perish for ever." Thus that very sin is committed, which the apostle warns men of, Rom. ii. 4. *The riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of* God which should *lead men to repentance* are abused to indulge and uphold them in sin. It is a shameful indignity and dishonour done to the goodness of God, to pretend to trust to it for salvation from punishment, and yet neglect the means this very goodness hath appointed to obtain it. But I will endeavour to convince you here, that this is not a sufficient or a safe way.

1. Infinite goodness doth not save sinning angels, and why should it save sinning men? Those noble creatures, who sinned against God, and left their first station, are for ever damned and miserable, and yet God is for ever good: How largely is his goodness diffused through all the heavenly world, and he receives endless hallelujahs for it; how largely on this earth, though we often overlook it, and neglect his praise: But he is not bound to exercise goodness in hell too; nor is his heart to be charged with hardness, nor his hand with shortness, because he will not save those who deserve destruction.

2. "Though the goodness of God be infinite in its nature, yet its exercises are all regulated and limited by wisdom and justice:" and these are also infinite. Wisdom hath joined with divine goodness, and saved a multitude of sinners; but is it bound to save them all? Or is it obliged to save you? Terrible majesty, holiness and consuming fire are with our God; and among rebellious creatures, his wisdom finds proper seasons and objects where these must have their exercise: And if you are sinners, why should not his just vengeance be let out upon you? It is a dreadful word which is written; *Isaiah* xxvii. 11. *This is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.* Those who are so ignorant of God and his way of salvation in the midst of the brightest means of knowledge, deserve destruction from the almighty, as the fool who says in his heart, *There is no God;* Psalm xiv. 1.

3. "There is no promise in the gospel made to those that rest on infinite goodness, and refuse the means God has ordained to salvation," that is, *repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;* Acts xx. 21. Goodness, when it is not bound by a promise, is perfectly free: And, indeed, if it were confined always to act to the utmost of its reach, it were not free, nor divine, nor worthy of God. And where there is no divine faithfulness engaged to support you by a promise, a sinner's hope in goodness itself will not be a sufficient and effectual security.

4. "Though the goodness of God is infinite, yet it doth not express itself in all the ways that it can do in temporal things, and why must it then be exercised in so unbounded a manner in things eternal?" If divine goodness exerted itself to the utmost in this life, there would be no pain, there would be no sickness among men, no heart-ache, no sorrow: But you see there is much sickness, sorrow and pain among us, notwithstanding the boundless goodness of God. There are ten thousand ways for infinite goodness to express itself in, besides in forgiveness of the sins of men. How do you know that God will forgive any one sinner, or bestow upon him eternal life? The light of nature cannot assure us of it, much less can the light of nature inform us, that a God of infinite goodness will pardon every sinner, or save them from the punishment which is due by his righteous law. And I am well assured the scripture gives

us no such general hope: Thousands and millions will be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord* Jesus, *and from the glory of his power;* 2 Thess. i. 9. notwithstanding his own and his Father's unsearchable treasures of grace and goodness. *The Lord is abundant in goodness,* and yet earth and hell abound in miserable creatures.

5. "Although you could prove that the mercy of God will pardon some sinners, yet how can you be sure it will pardon you?" If you were told, that it will save a million of transgressors, yet can you ever prove that it will save you? Nay, as highly sovereign as you fancy it to be, you may be still excluded from the exercise of it; for you may as well imagine this to be one instance of sovereignty, to forgive thousands, and yet punish you, if you have nothing else to plead but his mere goodness. Now it is not wise to venture so important an interest as that of an immortal soul upon any uncertainty whatsoever, if it can be avoided; and according to your own principle of dependence on sovereign mercy, you are left at a dreadful uncertainty, if you have nothing else to trust to but the mere sovereignty of divine goodness.

6. "You have over and over again, by repeated sins, forfeited all pretences to the favour and mercy of God:" Whatsoever ground you have had to hope in his goodness, yet you have cut off all those grounds by your frequent actual iniquities. Let us enter into particulars, and survey a little what claims, what pretences you have to trust in this absolute goodness of God.

1. Will you say, "You are his creature, and he is your Maker and owner, therefore you trust him to save what is his own?" But remember that every sin of yours has disowned his dominion, violated his authority, and forfeited his love and all his kind regards, as a Creator and proprietor.

2. Will you plead, "You have obeyed him, and done much service for him, and therefore you hope his goodness will reward you?" But have you not done more against him? Surely your sins are more than your acts of piety, and they cancel all pretended obligations you could hope to lay upon a God: I fear, should all our virtues and devotions be put into the scale against our vices and sins, they would be found greatly wanting in the weight.

3. Will you add this plea, "You are in a miserable state, and you trust in his compassion that he will not leave poor sinful wretched beings in a state of misery?" But have you not affronted him since your miseries began, and sinned against him, even in your bonds? And is not his compassion thereby utterly forfeited? Besides, might not fallen angels make the same plea as you do? Are they not in great misery? And yet are they not *bound in chains of darkness;* because of their sins, and shut up to further vengeance?

"O see what an uncertain foundation your souls lean upon, when you venture to trust in the mere absolute mercy of God, and his goodness, without his gospel. It is a goodness, sovereign and absolutely free, and therefore not bound to save such wretches as you from misery: It is a goodness that can see sinning angels perish for ever, and not help them: It is a goodness that is regulated in its exercises, by infinite wisdom and righteousness, and the authority and justice of a divine Governor, and these must have their proper exercises too: It is absolute goodness without a promise, without engagement; goodness that has ten thousand ways to exercise itself besides in forgiving criminals: It is a goodness that may forgive ten thousand sinners, and not forgive you;

and it is a goodness too, that you have so often dishonoured, whose favours you have so shamefully forfeited and abused. Stand and wonder then that it is not turned into fury against you long ago without change and without hope.

"Surely since I have a soul of immortal duration, I will strive to have better rest and support for it than this is, and never venture it here, since there is a stronger and better hope. Ye holy and happy souls that have learned the new and living way of coming to the Father, bless him, that he has not left you to seek all your salvation from absolute and unpromised goodness: Bless him that has bound his goodness by many a kind promise to you in his gospel, and sealed it with the blood of his own Son. We proceed now to consider.

III. "The third false or mistaken way of coming into the favour of God, and that is, by self-righteousness: For when we are made sensible that none is innocent, and the goodness of God in general is not sufficient ground enough to raise and support a solid and assured hope, then we are ready to offer something of our own to God, to engage this general goodness of his on our side, and make our righteousness the way to procure divine favour, expecting that God should exercise and express his goodness towards us, in the blessings of pardon and salvation. This self-righteousness may be divided into four sorts:

1. Penances and mortifications, sorrow and regret of soul, with all our own fancied atonements for sin.
2. Works of charity to the poor.
3. Forms of religious worship.
4. Outward reformation with vows and labour after better obedience. Let us examine each of these briefly:

1. "Penances and mortifications, and our own remorse of conscience and regret of soul, together with many fancied atonements for sin:" Thus the heathens, ancient and modern. What tortures have some of them inflicted on themselves for the expiation of their own sins, or the sins of their country? So great and powerful hath been their sense of the guilt of sin, that large sacrifices, and dreadful ones too, have been proposed by some of them for this purpose; *Micah* vi. 6, 7. *Thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil*, and some of them have actually offered their *first-born for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their souls.* The gentiles, when they are a little considerate, one would think, must acknowledge God to be the governor of the world, and that he is a great and dreadful God, who has, in very visible instances, sometimes manifested his displeasure against the sins of men, and *revealed his wrath from heaven against their unrighteousness and ungodliness;* Rom. i. 18. And under the fear and terror of his vengeance they have sometimes put on sackcloth and lived in ashes: They have denied themselves the common food of nature, and half famished their bodies with abstinence. So the Ninevites did at the threatening of the Lord by Jonah the prophet. Sometimes they have banished themselves from towns and cities, and all converse with men, into mere deserts and caves of the earth, and strained their limbs in painful postures, for years together, to make atonement for the sins of the people; so some of the pretended saints in the East-Indies have done. They have put themselves in iron cages, with sharp spikes, to be carried about and wounded from head to foot, as some of the bonzes in China; they have thrown themselves under a

heavy loaden chariot of their huge images and idols, and been crushed to death, as some of their holy men in Malabar. But what hath all this availed to obtain the favour of that God whom they have offended? *Who hath required this at their hands?* And what ground have they to think God will accept it?

So also those of the Roman church, who are fallen from the doctrine that St. Paul once wrote to the Romans, have invented various penances, and endeavoured to come into the favour of God by them: As though lashing themselves with cords, could satisfy infinite justice for their crimes, and wearing sackcloth on their flesh could make their polluted souls pure and acceptable to God. In following ages when the priests were grown more crafty and covetous, they taught them to come to God by money, and to buy pardons for sin, and titles to heaven of the pope. This was called a commutation of penance, and making their purse suffer instead of their flesh; and thus they compounded with the justice of God for the sins of their souls. *They lavish away much silver and gold,* to make atonement before God for breaking his law. Poor attempts and hopeless pretences, to remove the displeasure of a God and make a way for their favourable access to him? There have been some austere persons that have separated themselves from the lawful customs of the world, and common comforts of life, in order to appease their consciences for past indulgence and sensuality, as though God and his holiness, and his governing wisdom and majesty, would be as easily satisfied as their blinded consciences.

Others again after sin are terrified with fears of death and destruction; and under these impressions they seem to mourn for their sins, and then fly to their repentances and tears to save them; though perhaps their repentance and regret of conscience carries no more hatred of sin in it than Judas had, who hanged himself for inward vexation and anguish of soul; *Matt.* xxvii. 5. But if this repentance be never so sincere, is the great God obliged to pardon such repeated crimes and iniquities as ours are, merely because the criminal repents? Do the princes of the earth think it necessary to forgive every rebel and traitor, because he is sorry he has been guilty of treason and exposed himself to punishment? Why then should the king of kings be bound to let every criminal pass without being punished, merely because he repents of his wickedness? It will be said perhaps, we have nothing better to offer than our repentance. And what then? Must a poor rebel be always pardoned because he has nothing to make satisfaction to his injured sovereign, besides his own tears? And yet there are too many who still will hope that their sins are washed away, and their guilt atoned for, by their sorrows and repentances; and some christian divines have expressed themselves a little too grossly and unwarily on this point. O let us have a care of such mistakes, and bless the Lord, that he hath taught us a better laver than our own tears, a more powerful atonement than any of our sorrows or terrors. The pollutions of the soul by sin require a better cleansing, and affronts to the majesty of heaven demand a higher satisfaction or recompence, than any that we can make with our utmost efforts of this kind.

2. Others fly to "works of charity to the poor, or of supposed piety towards God, performed either in life or at death." Hence arise some extraordinary appearances of liberality in the world: This hope of making some compensation for sin, lays the foundation of churches and hospitals: And magnificent structures arise upon the earth to gain the favour of the God of heaven, who hath been provoked by former iniquities.

Whole estates are sometimes given away by old sinners, and alienated from their natural heirs and possessors, even from needy friends and kindred, and are devoted to religious and charitable uses, in order to purchase salvation for their souls. If they are protestants indeed, we can hardly suppose they have these actual reasonings within themselves, as to infer, that God will be so much pleased with these legacies, as to pardon their sins, for the sake of such a liberality to the church or the poor; this is the popish doctrine of merit, which as protestants we all renounce. But still there is a secret working of this self-righteousness in the hearts of multitudes: And when upon a death-bed they bequeath large legacies to the service of God, or the relief of the poor, they hope to breathe out their spirit comfortably into the hand of God the Father, with some dependance on these legacies, at least as sufficient evidences of their love to God, and with confident expectations of obtaining his salvation.

But alas! what can a little charity to the poor do toward the reconciliation of a God to an offending creature. Is there any force in this reasoning, because I do a kindness for a fellow-worm, therefore my Maker must love me, and forgive me all affronts against him? Or because I have given to the service of God, some of those worldly good things which he first bestowed upon me, therefore he must pardon all my former iniquities, he must receive me for ever into his favour, and confer upon me the riches of glory and the inheritance of the saints in light? How weak and ignorant are these reasonings? And yet how many have been ready to lay the stress of their hopes upon them, having nothing else within their view to trust in?

3. "Forms and observances of religious worship," are another vain pillar upon which sinners lean and support themselves. This is a most common and powerful deceit. How many thousands are there, that by daily attendance upon solemnities of worship and coming up to the house of God, hope at last to come to the arms of the Father with acceptance? And especially if they have practised secret devotion too, in the common rounds and forms of it, and have frequently bowed their knees to God in their retirements, their hope has risen high; and though they have not arrived at a thorough change of heart, and sincere love to God, yet they will presume upon his acceptance without any great concern about the salvation of Jesus Christ. But let me ask such sort of candidates for heaven and happiness, whether a formal round of duties and services, without the heart and soul in them, without sincere love to God and delight in him, can so far please the blessed God, as to persuade him to neglect all the righteous demands of his governing justice for past crimes? Or if your hearts are sometimes engaged in these solemnities, is this sufficient to cancel all former transgressions? Besides, if you have no Mediator, who shall introduce such a sinner, or his duties, into the presence of God with acceptance? May he not justly drive us with all our solemn formalities, afar from his seat, since we neglect the only hope set before us, that is, the name of his Son, without which no man shall come to be accepted of the Father. John xiv. 6. *No man cometh to the Father but by me.*

4. The last thing I mention, on which some persons are prone to depend, in order to obtain divine favour and forgiveness, is "a course of outward reformation, and some vows and some endeavours after better obedience:" But I would endeavour in these few particulars, to discover the vanity of all hopes of this kind.

1. Our duties of obedience are very imperfect: They do not in any degree answer the strict demands of the law and justice of God; and the best of them are so defec-

tive that they can never claim or pretend to any merit in them, since they do not come up to answer the requirements of God in his general rule of government.

2. Our obedience of to-day cannot wipe away or cancel the crimes of yesterday or our past life: These crimes stand like high and unpassable mountains in the way betwixt God and us: Paying a new debt never wipes off old scores among men, and why should we imagine it will do so before the throne of God?

3. Were our duties perfect, yet it is not only a guilty, but a worthless creature, a mere polluted worm performs them; and the eternal favour of an offended God is not to be purchased for rebels at so cheap a rate.

4. It is true, it is by duties of worship we must draw near unto God, and by the acts of our mind and will, by knowledge, assent, faith, trust, hope, prayer and repentance, we must come to God; but it is still by and through the mediation and interest of Jesus the Son, that these acts of the soul must be addressed to the Father. These considered alone in themselves, are not prescribed in my text as the way itself, for *Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:* He is the only true and *living way to God:* These actions performed with a due regard to Christ, are properly our walking in the way which God hath appointed; but if we have no regard to Christ in these actions, we are not walking in God's way, nor can we raise any solid hope that we shall arrive at his gracious presence, while we neglect or refuse the only way which God has ordained.

Perhaps some more intelligent or more conceited hearers may cry out here, why are these rudiments and plain principles of christianity preached to us? Surely we know better, and understand more of the gospel of Christ, than to make such discourses necessary for us to attend them. I answer,

Answer I. However learned some may be in these truths, yet perhaps there may be others coming continually into our assemblies, who know little enough either of the law or gospel; and they had need of the doctrines of their own guilt and misery, and danger to be spoken in very plain and clear language to them, before they will hearken and stand still, and consider their own circumstances, and their peril: And the nature of man when under the awakenings of conscience, is so prone to take hold of every false and feeble refuge, and to venture their eternal hopes upon them, that it is very necessary to speak these things often, and to represent them in the clearest light, in order to caution sinners against building their hopes on the sand, and resting all their expectation of the favour of God and happiness, upon some feeble foundation which will not bear them. It is not the wise and the learned that I pretend to instruct; but it is pity any poor soul, even of the lowest ranks of mankind, should abide ignorant of these important concerns, and should perish in such a land of light, and for want of christian knowledge.

Answer II. Let us search diligently our own hearts: Have we all attained and kept up such a due sense of our danger without Christ as we should have? Are we never inclined to depend on self-righteousness at all? Are we never under any temptation to indulge this false hope? Some pious souls have complained of this temptation, and corrupt nature is very ready in the best of christians, to build up some parts of their own righteousness as their sufficient refuge, and sometimes to put it in place of the perfect mediation and atonement of the blessed Jesus.

Answer III. However the case be now with us, and if we have truly got the victory

over all temptations of this kind, yet it is very proper to remember what once we were, and reflect upon what false hopes we once were ready to build on, and to bless the Holy Spirit of light and grace, that hath discovered our mistakes unto us, that has turned our feet from every dangerous hope, and led us to the Father by the true and living way Christ Jesus. Let this thought also call us to mourn over the souls of men, even the greatest part of our fellow-creatures, inhabitants of this world, who are made of the same flesh and blood as we are, and who, through gross ignorance, are ever practising some foolish methods of pacifying God for past sins, and aiming at his favour and happiness in such ways as will never attain their end. O come, Lord Jesus, and spread thy light and thy truth through the dark nations, and scatter all the remaining mists and darknesses that lie upon countries which have only the name of Christ, and some of the forms of his religion among them. Thousands there are, even in Europe, who neither know the gospel in truth, nor come to God by this Mediator: They live not by the faith of the Son of God, nor have just reason, according to the gospel, to expect divine favour and forgiveness. Blessed God, enlighten the thousands of dark and wretched mankind, and lead them in thy appointed way to happiness.

The next essay will shew us a plain and easy account of faith in Christ, or of coming to God by Christ, I acknowledge I have been sometimes uneasy and ashamed to hear a divine of the protestant church tell his people, that faith in Christ is a mysterious thing, and it is not to be well known, or clearly conceived in itself, but it may be much better conceived by its effects, therefore, saith he, I proceed, instead of speaking of faith itself, to give you an account of the fruits and effects of it.

As though there was any thing in the affairs of human life, in reason, or in religion, clearer than this notion, viz. Upon a sight and sense of our sins and dangers, and our weakness to help ourselves, to commit ourselves into the hands of Christ, by a humble act of trust or dependence on him, complying with his appointed methods of relief in the gospel.

It is but as a man sensible of his sickness applies himself to a wise and knowing physician, and gives himself up to him, and trusts himself in his hands to relieve him, complying with the remedies appointed in order to his cure: which I hope will appear very plain in the following essay.

ESSAY V.

A PLAIN AND EASY ACCOUNT OF A SINNER'S COMING TO GOD BY JESUS CHRIST, OR OF SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

JOHN XIV. 6.

NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME.

INNOCENT man in the day of his creation had a liberty of drawing near to God his Maker, and of delightful converse with him in a more immediate manner; but man having fallen from God, and become guilty in his person, and sinful in his nature, dwells in this world afar off from God; and yet sometimes would attempt to approach him, and obtain his favour again merely by his own powers and performances; as though the goodness of God would receive him again into his presence, and into his love in the same manner as before. Sinful mankind have been often trying to make their way to God in and of themselves: Thence arise those various mistaken grounds of hope, of which we have given an account in the former discourse: But the blessed God has sufficiently informed us in the word of his gospel, that it is in vain for us to hope to draw near to God, our offended sovereign, without a Mediator; and *there is but one Mediator* of God's appointment *between God and man*, and that is *the man Christ Jesus;* 1 Tim. ii. 5. and *no man cometh unto the Father but by him;* John xiv. 6.

Now in order to explain what it is for sinners to come to God the Father by Jesus Christ, let us consider that all saving approaches of the creature unto God, depend on God's approaches to the creature: He first draws us by his grace, and then we follow. Jer. xxxi. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* 1 John iv. 19. If *we love him,* it is *because he loved us first.* If our souls are set a moving towards him, it is because his heart, his pity and his love moved first towards us. In the reconciliation of God and his sinful creatures, there must be a mutual approach, and a mutual nearness; but it must be remembered, that the sinners coming nigh to God, is but an echo or answer to the merciful voice of God coming nigh to him: And the same method in which we may suppose the great God to draw near to sinners, the same steps should we take in drawing near to God. It must be granted, indeed, that all the acts of God are eternal, and his decrees have no order of succession as they are in him: The eternal mind conceives the ends and beginnings of all things at once; but there are many expressions in scripture which condescend to our frailty, and teach us to conceive of the infinite and eternal things of God by way of time and succession, that we may obtain a fuller and clearer understanding of them; for no created mind is capacious enough to grasp all the divine decrees in one single thought, as that God does who formed them.

It should be observed also, that though the actions of the soul of man are generally produced in a successive way, yet sometimes two or three of these acts are so swift in

their succession, and so nearly simultaneous, or at the same moment that they are blended together, or are so interwoven in many cases, that it is hard to say which is first, and which is last: And many times also, in one and the same act of the soul, there are such different views and designs concurring, as may make it look like two or three distinct actions: So returning to God by Jesus Christ includes in it both repentance, with all the acts contained therein, as well as faith, with all its subordinate motions: It is repentance as it is a return to God; it is faith as Jesus Christ is the medium of this return. I put in this caution here, only to shew, that we are not to expect every single sinner that returns to God by Jesus Christ, must have all these particular motions of the soul, or all these transactions sensibly passing through his mind, and that in the same order as is here represented; yet the representation of these things in some rational order, may greatly help the conception of the whole, and give persons somewhat of a more clear and more distinct idea of it.

Let us then here take a survey of those "several steps, whereby God may be supposed to draw near to fallen man, in order to his recovery, and thereby we shall learn what corresponding steps sinners must take, in order to their coming to God."

I. The blessed God surveying his lower creation, beheld all mankind as creatures in general fallen from his image and his love, and at a wide and dreadful distance from their Creator. Compare Psalm xiv. 2, 3. with Rom. iii. 9—12. *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God: They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no, not one.* This text of the psalmist is cited by the apostle in *Rom.* iii. 9—12. to prove that all mankind is afar off from God by nature; and therefore I may justly use this scripture, to prove that God beheld us in this fallen estate; he saw us lie under the righteous condemnation of his broken law, justly exposed to misery, and deserving his indignation and wrath, under a sentence of death, and yet still going farther from him without his fear or his love.

Now in correspondence with this view, which God has taken of the children of men, in their guilt and misery in general; we also, in order to our recovery, must be brought to see ourselves guilty and miserable, we must see ourselves destitute of the image and the love of God in our fallen state of nature, if ever we would return to him by Christ and grace.

God, who is essentially happy in being for ever near himself, and one with himself, has made the happiness of his creatures to depend on their being near to him, and their union with him; and he knows it is misery enough to be afar off from God: So must we be made deeply sensible of our wretchedness and misery in the loss of the favour and image of God, and in our dreadful state of distance and estrangedness from him. We must behold ourselves exposed to the wrath of God, and under sentence of just condemnation and death, because of sin. We must see it so as to feel it, and be affected with it at our heart; we must have such an impression of it made upon our souls, so as never to be satisfied to continue in such a state, and be restless in seeking some way of recovery, as I shall shew more particularly afterwards.

II. The great God surveying his own glorious perfections in himself, and the just rights of his government, taking a view also of the holiness, justice, and wisdom of his law, which sinful man had grievously dishonoured and affronted by disobedience; he

did not think it proper for himself, as the supreme Governor of the world, to receive sinful creatures into his favour again, without some signal honour done to his broken law and his authority; as a sort of righteous recompence for the affront and dishonours done thereto by the offence of his creatures. It became the great God to make his law appear wise and just, by demanding such a reparation of the dishonour done to it.

But he found all mankind utterly incapable of making any such recompence, since all that they could do for time to come was but their known duty to their Creator, and none of their sufferings, short of destruction and eternal death, could make atonement or satisfaction for the sins that were past: And in this view of things the great God did, as it were, pronounce the recovery of his creature man, by all his own powers and capacities, altogether hopeless, and that his recovery must arise only from divine grace.

In correspondence to this view of things in the eye of God, we should also set before our own eyes the holiness, justice, and wisdom of the law of our Creator, in order to make ourselves deeply sensible of our great guilt, in breaking his law, and our desert of death by the transgression of it: We should also be made sensible in some measure of the right of his divine authority and government, to demand some satisfaction for our offences, before we be received into his favour again. The very workings of natural conscience under a sense of guilt, seem to be an impression from the God of nature on the mind of man, that sin deserves punishment, because the law of a God broken requires some reparation of honour.*

On this account we ought to reflect on ourselves as the more miserable and helpless, in our guilty state, because we are utterly incapable to make any atonement for our own sins, or to repair the dishonour that hath been done to God's holy law and his authority thereby. We must look upon our circumstances, therefore, as hopeless in ourselves, and acknowledge that all our hope is in the free grace and mercy of God. *Every mouth must be stopped* on this account, *and all the world* lie at the foot of God *as guilty before him*, as justly exposed to his indignation, and unable to procure his favour: *Rom.* iii. 19.

III. The great God saw it also impossible to bring sinners near to himself, and make them partakers of his favour and happiness, without a change of their corrupt natures, an entire alteration of their vicious affections, and an universal turn of heart from sin to God. In our present fallen and sinful state, God beheld our hearts so averse to all that is holy and divine, that we could never be fit for converse with him, or the enjoyment of him as a God of holiness, without being renewed after his image and likeness, and possessed of a sincere love to him.

And he also beheld these guilty sinful creatures utterly incapable of recovering

* This is so universal in all ages among the considerate part of mankind, that the heathens themselves, in their own circumstances, thought a "nemesis" or vindictive indignation of God would attend on sinners. *Acts* xxviii. 4. They thought St. Paul was a murderer, and therefore vengeance followed him. And this set them upon various and foolish inventions, to make atonement for sin: Nor is it to be supposed, that the craft of priests alone could so easily and so universally have imposed on the nations their self-punishments, and their expensive sacrifices of atonement, if there had not been something in the natural consciences of mankind, which told them they wanted an atonement for sin. And in this respect the workings of natural conscience should be encouraged, and kept awake, and sensible of the wrath of God, which sin deserves, and that God will require some satisfaction to his injured law and government.

themselves to his image by a change of their natures, and by a thorough conversion of their hearts from sin, and the creature, to God and holiness: So that this is another obstacle in the sight of God to our reconciliation, and which we of ourselves cannot surmount. In the same manner, in order to our recovery, we must look upon ourselves in our fallen state, as unfit for correspondence with God, incapable of enjoying happiness in his presence, by reason of the opposition of our will to his holiness, and to our duty, we must be sensible of the great carnality of our affections cleaving to earthly things, and to the tempting vanities of this life, choosing them for our portion and our happiness instead of God.

And we must be acquainted also, how weak and feeble all our own efforts are to work this mighty and universal change of nature in us, to form our spirits anew, and to rectify all the moral disorders in them. We must be made sensible how incapable we are of giving our souls a new bent and bias toward things divine and heavenly, instead of that sinful propensity which works in our natures, and is ever leading us astray from God and true happiness; so that if ever we are recovered, we must depend entirely upon the free grace and mercy of God for our whole recovery; not only to provide a satisfaction for his own injured law and authority, but also to take away the perverseness and obstinacy of our wills, and to change our vile affections into holy and heavenly. This is that poverty of spirit, that sensibility of our own helpless state, which is the first foundation of the kingdom of God within us. So our Saviour teaches, Matt. v. 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.* This is that humility of soul which the men of Laodicea wanted; *Rev.* iii. 17. When they were really great sinners before God, they supposed themselves *rich, and increased in goods, and wanting nothing:* But before they were recovered, it was necessary they should see they were *poor, and blind, and wretched, and naked.*

IV. Though God beheld mankind in these deplorable and helpless circumstances, yet he was pleased, out of his free grace, to decree and determine, that they should not all perish. He resolved to bring some off at least, out of their state of distance from him, and to restore them to his favour and his image, to holiness and happiness. Whether this gracious will and design of God, be so clearly and sufficiently discovered, to the light of nature, in his providential goodness to all the world, I will not now debate: But it is sufficiently discovered in the gospel, or the book of grace.

In correspondence with this gracious design and determination of the blessed God, it is necessary that we also should have some hope and belief of God's willingness to be reconciled, or that there is grace and compassion with him for returning sinners: Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God must believe, that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him:* And in this view, belief and hope, we should resolve never to rest and continue in such deplorable circumstances: But desire and strive with all our powers to return to God, and never be content without obtaining his favour and image, we should humbly resolve and determine that we will not perish, but that we will return to the great God, through the aids and encouragements of his grace, in what way and manner soever he is pleased to return unto us. In this sense we may say that *the kingdom of heaven,* or the blessings of salvation *suffer violence,* as our Saviour expresses it; Matt. xi. 12. *and the violent take it by force.* This holy desire, with some degree of resolution, seems to be the first step or motion of the will towards God; these are the begin-

nings of true repentance flowing from faith or hope in divine mercy; this is the first work of a saving conversion, even a restlessness of soul in this state of distance from God, and under the hope of his mercy, a sincere desire and holy resolution of heart to return towards him, as our portion and our everlasting happiness. This is that repentance towards God, and faith in his mercy, which was necessary in all ages, and in all nations, and under every dispensation, in order to the salvation of sinful mankind from their state of misery, and in order to return to God.

V. When God designed to recover man to himself, and restore him to his favour, he designed also to secure a due honour to his government for all times to come, and obedience to his authority in all his future demands: And for this end man must be made, in some measure, to feel the evil of sin by the painful consequences of it, *viz.* "shame and remorse of conscience, and holy sorrow for his past transgressions:" And God designed that these actings of the soul should have a powerful and a lasting influence, through his grace, to make men hate every sin, and fear and avoid it, and awaken him to constant sincere endeavours of universal obedience to a forgiving God for time to come.

Agreeably to this design of God, the sinful creature must seek to have his heart, in some measure, painfully affected with shame and sorrow, for his past folly and disobedience to his Creator; and must learn hereby to hate every sin, and constantly avoid it, and he must endeavour after universal compliance with the will of God in all future instances of duty. These are the natural and necessary operations and attendants of all true repentance wheresoever it is found, and will be in greater or less degrees, working in the heart of every sinner that truly returns to God: For the great design of God in all his transactions of grace towards fallen man, is to recover to himself *a peculiar people*, averse to sin and *zealous of good works;* Titus ii. 13. and that under the motives of his pardoning love, and the aids of his sanctifying grace, they walk before him in all holiness. This also belongs to all the several dispensations of the grace of God ever since the fall of man, and is required of every creature who should return to God.

VI. In the New Testament, the great God hath made much plainer discoveries of the particular way of his return to sinful man, *viz.* that he did not think fit to be reconciled to men, or bring them back again to himself, without a Mediator.* This was intimated in God's earliest revelations of his grace, when he spake of the *seed of the woman, which should bruise the head of the serpent*, and destroy the designs of the tempter to ruin mankind: But under the christian dispensation, it is much more abundantly manifested: And finding no other person sufficient for this work, God chose his own Son to become *a Mediator between God and man;* even that Son of his love, who was *one with the Father;* John x. 30. and *lay in his bosom*, and had *glory with* him there, *before the foundation of the world;* chapters i. 18. xvii. 5. that Son *in whom dwelt all the*

* There may be several reasons why the blessed God thought fit to save mankind by a Mediator, and not without one; as, 1. To maintain his own honour and the dignity of his majesty; for it does not seem so proper for a God of such supreme glory, to admit such criminals immediately into his favour, and his presence, and his embraces, without some honourable Mediator to introduce them. 2. To do sublime honour to his Son Jesus Christ, who is the express image of his person and his first favourite, that as by him God made the world, so by him mankind should be recovered, new created, and restored to God's favour and image again. 3. To secure the salvation of man more effectually, uniting all the saved number in one unfailing and all-sufficient head: And therefore his own Son was chosen for this office, as being able to undertake all that was necessary completely to bring back man to God.

fulness of the godhead; Col. ii. 9. even that Son *by whom he created the world* and mankind at first; *Eph.* iii. 10. *Heb.* i. 3. it was by him, as a Mediator, that he designed to recover man from his ruins, his guilt, and his wretchedness.

This was the Messiah whom God promised to Abraham, who should be one of his posterity, and in whom *all the nations of the earth should be blessed;* Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18. This was he whom God spoke of, and recommended by many of the prophets, and described under several types and figures in ancient ages, that when he came he might be better known and accepted by the world. This was he who *in the fulness of time,* Gal. iv. 5. was sent to take flesh and blood upon him, and to become a complete man. This is the *one* and only *Mediator between God and man,* even *the man Christ Jesus;* 1 Tim. ii. 5. who was also one with God.

For this end it pleased the Father to furnish him with every necessary talent and qualification: He *anointed him* with his Holy Spirit to dwell in him *without measure;* John iii. 34. he appointed him to be born of a woman in low circumstances of life, and to grow up through all the stages of infancy, childhood, and youth, to the manly age of thirty; then he called and commissioned him to be a public prophet and teacher of the gospel, or the way of salvation: He set him up also for an example of humility and love towards God and man, and of holiness, submission and patience, and universal obedience through the course of his life, and then appointed him to die as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men: God *laid our sins upon him;* Isaiah liii. 6. and *set him forth,* or foredetermined him *to be a propitiation for sin through faith* or trust *in his blood;* Rom. iii. 25.

This is he whom *God raised from the dead, and exalted him at his right hand* to be an *intercessor* for sinful man there, in the virtue of his sacrifice, and to be the head of vital influence to men, to work *repentance and holiness in their hearts, as well as to be a prince, or Lord and Saviour, to bestow forgiveness of sins;* Acts ii. 32, 33. God gave him also power to rule and govern all things for the good of his people, and ordained him to be judge of the world at the great day. And all this was designed of God, that his Son, Jesus *the Mediator,* might answer every necessity, and be able to supply every want of sinful man, in order to his complete salvation. Now in correspondence with these counsels of God the Father, in order to bring fallen man near to himself, sinners must believe the truth and certainty of God's appointment, that they shall not come to him again without a Mediator; and they must have a certain and well-settled persuasion of this divine constitution.

It is granted that there have been some such thoughts among mankind, in all ages: They have had some notion of coming to God by a Mediator, from an awful sense of the majesty and holiness of God, and of their own vileness and unworthiness, and their desert of his displeasure because of sin. So Job, when he had described his own sinfulness, in the sight of a pure and holy God, *chapter* ix. *verses* 30, 31. he adds, *God is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon both;* for Job had not a clear light at this time, of the great Mediator who was appointed, though it is plain he saw that he wanted one.

So again the Israelites at mount Sinai, when they saw God in his terrible appearances of thunder and lightning, and a voice came from the fire, they said, *Let not God speak*

to us lest we die, but let Moses speak to us and we will hear; Exodus xx. 19. they declare they wanted a Mediator. The heathens had their lower deities, who were supposed, even by the philosophers, to be mediators between them and the supreme God. Besides, God transacts his great affairs with mankind, oftentimes according to the language, customs, and manners of men. Now it is the natural and common way of offenders, against a superior, to get some mediator to speak for them, and bring them into favour again. Mankind also, in order to this reconciliation, must have some knowledge of this mediator: They must be acquainted with the most important articles which God has revealed concerning this great Mediator Christ Jesus.

We are called to behold him, and to survey him in the glory of his personal excellencies, in his original fitness for this work of a reconciler, and in the several offices which God has commissioned him to sustain, as just before described. We must be made to see the blessed Jesus in the riches of his grace, and his large and various furniture for this great undertaking: We must believe what God has pronounced concerning him, and from the bottom of our hearts humbly approve of these counsels for our salvation. It must be the language of our hearts in a way of echo to the appointment of God, *There is none like him,* there is none like Christ, for a reconciler of the offended God and offending man; he is every way a suitable relief to our wants, and all-sufficient to save.

We must see him as one that has made full atonement and satisfaction to the justice and majesty of God, for the sins of men by his own sufferings and death*: We must approve of him as our great teacher, and our glorious example; as our high-priest to reconcile us to God by his blood, and to make intercession for us at the mercy-seat in heaven; as *one that is able to save to the uttermost,* because he lives for ever. *Heb.* vii. 25. to fulfil all his offices. We must behold him as a Lord and governor appointed to rule over us, and to give us laws, and to defend us from our enemies: We must see him as the most proper person to be our head of vital influence, for the communication of all grace and holiness to us, for the changing of our natures into his Father's image and his own; and as one that is able and willing to take care of us through this world, and bring us safe into the Father's presence at last with exceeding joy. Thus the faith of the sinner echoes to the voice of God concerning Jesus the Saviour, in a way of assent to what God has revealed, and in a way of humble approbation of what God has appointed.

7. The great God foreseeing the obstinacy, corruption and wickedness of the heart of man, well knew that all this preparation to restore mankind to holiness and happiness, might at last be ineffectual, and might all be performed in vain, unless he took one step further; and therefore to secure this salvation to many, he gave them into the hands of his Son Jesus Christ, and committed the care of their salvation to him; he gave them to

* Though it is not necessary for every person among the fallen race of Adam, to find out the real and eternal necessity of his coming to God by a Mediator, or that such an atonement must needs be made for the sins of men, yet since God saw it most proper to appoint this way, and to ordain his Son Jesus to be this Mediator and this atonement, and to reveal it in so many plain and express declarations of his word, I think it may be readily agreed, that it is our evident duty, now we know this gospel, to approve of this atonement so plainly revealed, and this Mediator, as a most reasonable appointment, and to come near to God by him, even by faith in his blood, if we would find certain acceptance with God.

Christ, or entrusted him with the care of them, that he might fulfil his whole commission, and all his various offices, in a most effectual and powerful manner with regard to them; appointing also that this same gospel should be preached to the rest of mankind, and the offers of this salvation should be made to them some way or other, in various seasons, in plainer or darker discoveries thereof. Therefore though the gospel be sent to be preached to all the world in general, and salvation to be offered them through Jesus Christ, yet we are told often by the evangelist John, of those particular persons whom the Father had given unto Christ, that they might be his, that is, his seed, his subjects, and his willing people.

In conformity to this great act of the Father in committing the souls of men into the hands of Christ, we also having seen him all-sufficient for this work, must commit our souls into his hand as one able to keep what we commit to him until the last day; 2 *Tim.* i. 12. We must resign ourselves unto him, as a glorious undertaker for our salvation: We must receive him, or be willing to submit to him, in all his appointed offices of prophet, priest, king, example, head of influence, &c. that we may receive from him every thing that we stand in need of, in order to our being brought home to God in heaven. We must trust in him as a Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance to sinners, and forgiveness of sins. We must trust in him as the great propitiation for our sins, our peace-maker, and the procurer of our pardon; we must live upon him as our head of vital influence, to change our sinful natures, and to work the principles of all grace in us by his Holy Spirit, and to preserve them in opposition to all our corruptions: We must depend on what he hath done and suffered for us, as the ground of our acceptance with God, and we must seek to him to form our natures so far in the likeness of God, as to fit us for happiness in the enjoyment of God for ever. We must commit the important affairs of our souls to him, as one that is able to take care of them, and to carry them safely through all the temptations and dangers of the present life; and we must trust in him to receive our departing spirits at death, to raise our bodies from the dust at the last day, and to make our whole natures completely holy and happy, in the favour and image of God for ever; All this belongs to his commission which he received from the Father.

This is that great act of christian faith, trust, hope or dependance, which we are so often called to perform in the New Testament, which is foretold by the prophets of old, and upon which our salvation is so much represented to depend, in the writings of the evangelists and the apostles.

8. If I were to add any thing to what has been already said, it should be this, *viz.* that as God the Father has appointed his Son Jesus Christ to be the great and general medium of our restoration and return to his favour, image and happiness, so he has appointed that in all our particular addresses, and applications to himself, in a way of prayer or trust, thanksgiving or praise, we should make use of the name of his Son Jesus, as the only valuable and worthy foundation for our hope of acceptance; that so Jesus Christ the Son, as well as the Father, may be honoured and glorified throughout the whole course of our religion in our way to heaven.

And since this is the constant design, and the express appointment of the Father, it is necessary that we comply therewith, in all our addresses to God: We must come unto the Father by him in every part of worship: By him we must believe, or trust

in God; we must pray to the Father in his name, we must ask forgiveness of our sins for his sake: It is by him we must offer up our sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise; *Heb.* xiii. 15. and by him we must present all our services of obedience, and whatsoever we do in word or deed, must be all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; *Col.* iii. 17. that we may be accepted of the Father, and that the Father may be glorified in his Son.

This is the appointment of the blessed God, and this must be our practice till we come to the fulness of this salvation in heaven, where we shall dwell for ever in the presence of God, and where we shall join with all the holy and happy tribes of mankind, of every age and nation, in ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and praise, to him that sits upon the throne, as our reconciled God, and to the Lamb for ever, as our glorious and successful Mediator. *Amen.*

ESSAY VI.

A VIEW OF THE MANIFOLD SALVATION OF MAN BY JESUS CHRIST, REPRESENTED IN ORDER TO RECONCILE CHRISTIANS OF DIFFERENT SENTIMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

MANKIND by nature lies under the ruins of the fall, both as guilty and as sinful. We are guilty in our persons, and exposed to the divine anger, as well as sinful in our natures, and ever ready to break his holy law. Whosoever therefore becomes our complete Saviour must relieve us under both these distresses.

As we are guilty in the sight of God, we are condemned in the court of his law and justice, we are liable to bear the punishment due to our sins, and we have lost all pretence of right to the favour of God and eternal life. Now our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who has undertaken the work of our salvation, is an all-sufficient Saviour in every respect; by his obedience, death, and intercession, he relieves us from the guilt of sin, and so delivers us from all obligations to the punishments of hell: He reconciles us to God, and gives us a right to life and salvation in the heavenly world.

As we are sinful creatures we are ever ready to offend God afresh, and are utterly unfit for his heavenly presence: And Christ saves us in this respect, by changing our vicious nature and temper, sanctifying us by his grace or Holy Spirit, so that we may be prepared for the enjoyment of God in heavenly places.

In these two things the substance of our salvation chiefly consists: And since these divine affairs could not be so well understood by us, according to those sublime ideas by which God the Father and his Son transact them in their eternal counsels and their subsequent dispensations, therefore God has been pleased to reveal them to us under such ideas or representations, and in such forms of language, as are borrowed from our common affairs in human life: And that not only by one figure or emblem, but by many representations, that we might view them on all sides, and have a fuller knowledge of them, so far as is sufficient for our present state, or necessary to our salvation.

SECTION I.

THE CHARACTERS OF CHRIST AS OUR DELIVERER FROM THE SINFULNESS OF OUR NATURES.

FIRST, let us take a very brief survey of this matter, as our Lord Jesus Christ delivers us from our sinful natures, or the power of sin that works in us, for he is our sanctification as well as our righteousness; 1 *Cor.* i. 30.

Our blessed Saviour, in this respect, is sometimes represented as our almighty Redeemer, who rescues us from the power of Satan, and of our own lusts, by the more powerful influences of his Spirit: He is our Sanctifier, who renews the image of God in us, which was lost by our first apostacy, and this he does by his sovereign creating power, for we are created anew unto good works, in or by Christ Jesus: *Eph.* ii. 10. He is sometimes set forth as our prophet, to give us light and the knowledge of God, and of the way of salvation, by the divine instructions of his gospel. He is our example to go before us, and to mark out for us the path of duty and holiness by his own footsteps, and to encourage our walking therein by his precedency, and so he is also our forerunner to heaven. Christ is also our King to give us laws and rules of life, and to rule in our hearts by giving us an inclination to obey his laws: By his royal power also in his exalted state, he subdues sin in us, he mortifies our unruly appetites and passions which are his enemies, he brings every power of our nature into obedience and subjection to himself. He fits us for the heavenly kingdom, and actually bestows upon us this final happiness. He is also represented in scripture as our vital head, or head of spiritual life, and believers are his members; and so his Spirit becomes the spring of spiritual life in us, renews our sinful nature, raises us from death in trespasses and sins, conveys a new and divine life to us, and will at last, by the same Spirit, raise our bodies from the dead, to live for ever with him.

Thus much concerning one branch of our salvation, *viz.* the recovery of our nature from the sinfulness thereof, which I shall no longer insist upon here.

SECTION II.

THE CHARACTERS OF CHRIST AS OUR DELIVERER FROM THE GUILT AND PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

The other branch of our salvation is, that which I chiefly have in view at present, *viz.* that which consists in the deliverance of our persons from the guilt of sin, from condemnation, and punishment, and in that right to eternal life which is provided and given us by our Lord Jesus Christ. There are many representations thereof in scripture, borrowed from the affairs of men; and the characters which our blessed Lord sustains, together with the respects that our faith and our salvation bear to him under these characters, are chiefly such as these:

I. The first and most general character which our Lord Jesus Christ assumes, is that of a Saviour, by which name he is most frequently called in the New Testament. This is the very signification of his proper name Jesus, in the Hebrew; *Matt.* i. 21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. He saves or delivers us from sin, and from all the painful or criminal effects and consequences thereof: He delivers us from the wrath to come; 1 *Thess.* i. 10. he saves us by withholding the divine anger from us, and taking away every thing that provoked it, or might provoke it.

Salvation is the natural word to express the blessings we receive from Christ, as he is our Saviour, that is, salvation from the guilt of sin and punishment thereof, partly in

this world, and chiefly in the world to come. Faith* gives us a special interest in these blessings, by choosing him or receiving him as our Saviour, by "*looking to him from the ends of the earth,* from the borders of hell, that we may *be saved;* Isaiah xlv. 22. by *calling upon the name of the Lord, that we may be saved;* Rom. x. 13. and by yielding obedience to him: So faith in a large sense may be represented, for Heb. v. 9. *He is the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him,* or accept of all the blessings of salvation in his own appointed way.

II. The next title which is given to our Lord Jesus, on this account, is a Mediator, to make peace between an offended God and offending man; 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus.* He is that *days-man* as Job speaks, *chapter* ix. 33. that great Reconciler, that Umpire or person who can argue for us with the blessed God, who is able to *lay his hand upon both,* to come between God and man, and to remove this dreadful difference betwixt them. And this he did by all those methods which God has appointed in the covenant of redemption made with his Son Jesus Christ, that is, by his incarnation, his obedience, his sufferings, his death, his intercession, &c.

Our salvation under this character is called peace; *Rom.* v. 1. Jesus Christ himself, for this reason, is called our Peace or Peace-maker; *Eph.* ii. 24. and *Isaiah* xxvii. 5. where a sinner is represented as *taking hold of the strength* or arm of the Lord, in order to *make peace with him.* It is called *reconciliation to God;* 2 Cor. v. 18. and the gospel is called *the word of reconciliation:* And let it be observed, that our Mediator not only takes away the difference between God and man, but has also proceeded so far as to obtain an interest in the love and favour of God for ever, instead of his former wrath, and displeasure, and condemnation.

Faith applies this salvation to us, or secures to us an interest therein, by our humble acceptance of Jesus Christ for such a Mediator as God has proposed him in his word. Now this acceptance of him as our Mediator, implies in it an earnest desire of reconciliation to God by him, as St. Paul *beseeches* the Corinthians to be willing *to be reconciled.* It is an inward and hearty approbation of what Christ has done, and what he does for our reconciliation in his mediatorial offices, attended with sincere repentance for past offences, and a submission to God for time to come, which is necessarily, and in the very nature of things required of all that would be reconciled to God, by the mediation of Christ,† and hereby we become partakers of those blessings of pardon, peace and grace, which are procured by our great Mediator.

III. Christ is set forth as our High-Priest in the New Testament, as he was typified under that character in the Old Testament, and especially in the epistle to the Hebrews, *chapters* iv. viii. and ix. Now in fulfilling this office, he offered a sacrifice acceptable to

* It is granted that the word faith in Christ, in its most strict and proper sense, signifies a trust in him, according to the several discoveries made of him in the gospel: But if taken in its most large and general sense, as it implies the address or application of a sinner to Jesus Christ for salvation, it includes in it those various actions of the soul which are attendants on this trusting, either with it, before it, or after it, as many scriptures sufficiently manifest.

† The personal ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, was *repent and believe the gospel;* Mark i. 15. The message with which he sent his apostles to the Jews was the same; *Mark* vi. 12. *Luke* ix. 6. and the business of St. Paul among the gentiles, was to *testify to them repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus;* Acts xx. 21.

God upon earth, even a sacrifice of atonement, or propitiation by his own blood, and he ascended to heaven to present it there before the throne of God; *Heb.* viii. 3. and ix. 12, 22, 24. He went thither, *not without blood, to appear for us in the presence of God*, and to intercede for us in the virtue of his sacrifice, *chapter* vii. 25. which, in the language of scripture, is represented "as carrying his blood into heaven, and as it were appearing with it there before the throne of God." All which was shadowed out by the high-priest carrying the blood of the sacrifice into the holy of holies, and sprinkling it there at the mercy-seat.

Our salvation under this character is called also *peace, pardon, or remission of sins, reconciliation and eternal redemption, and the promise of the eternal inheritance;* Heb. ix. 12, 15. Faith entitles us to the saving benefits of the *priesthood* of Christ, by the acceptance of him as our *High-Priest and Intercessor*, to make our *peace with God*, by appearing before God for us in the virtue of his sacrifice, and *making intercession for us* there. Or faith may be represented as our *coming to God* the Father by Jesus Christ, as *our High-Priest*, or applying to *the throne of grace* for mercy under the umbrage and encouragement of Jesus *our High-Priest, who has gone thither for us;* Heb. iv. 14—16.

IV. Our Lord Jesus Christ is described not only as our High-Priest, but he himself was also the very sacrifice of propitiation or atonement, *to take away our sins;* Heb. ix. 12, 26. He offered himself up to God for us as a sacrifice; *Eph.* v. 2. and *his blood was shed for the remission of our sins*, as in the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, recited by the several evangelists, and by St. Paul; 1 *Cor.* xi. *Isaiah* liii. 10. *God* the Father was pleased *to make his soul an offering for sin.*

Our salvation this way has the same names as under the former head, *viz.* the *washing away our sins by his blood;* Rev. i. 5. The *forgiveness of sin, reconciliation to God, &c.* Our faith is called *faith or trust in his blood as our propitiation;* Rom. iii. 24. It is a dependence on the virtue and efficacy of this blood of Christ, for the procuring our pardon: It is a sort of confession of our sins over the head of the sacrifice, which was an ancient ceremony in the levitical law, sometimes performed by the offender, and sometimes by the priest, whereby sins were transferred to the sacrifice who was to suffer for them, either by being slain, or by being sent into the land of separation and destruction; *Lev.* i. 4. and iii. 13. and v. 6. and xvi. 21. It is as it were a putting our guilty souls under the *sprinkling* of this atoning *blood*, that we may be cleansed from every defilement, and it doth, as it were, present to God the Father that blood on which our hope is placed.

V. Christ is yet further represented to us as an Advocate, which idea is a very different thing from his intercession as a High-Priest; 1 John ii. 2. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* The proper design of an high-priest is to transact affairs between God and man, for reconciliation and divine favour, &c. An advocate is a person appointed and chosen to plead before a court of justice against a charge of accusation, and by his pleading to bring off his client with honour, or to defend one who is charged with a crime, from the condemnation and death which might be due to it. So our Lord Jesus Christ, our Advocate, pleads against the charges which the law of God, or which Satan, our adversary, may bring against us; not by pretending that we are not guilty, but by pleading the atonement made by his blood for our sins, by pleading our pardon in the court of heaven, and by pleading his own righteousness, as the foundation of our hope; and therefore as the apostle in this very

text calls him *Jesus Christ the righteous;* in Rev. xii. 10, 11. Satan is represented as accusing the saints *day and night before God.* Jesus Christ is their Advocate, representing his own blood, and in this sense they are said to cast down the accuser by the blood of the Lamb, which pleads and *speaks better things than the blood of Abel;* that is, it pleads for mercy, whereas the blood of Abel pleaded for vengeance.

Our salvation, in this sense, is called freedom from guilt, absolution or acquitment from the penalty, and a vindication of christians from the charge of sin, and the condemnation thereof, which is obtained by the prevailing power and interest which Jesus Christ our Advocate has at the court of heaven, and by representing before the throne of God our pardon purchased by his blood, so that Satan has no further charge against us. By faith we commit our case and circumstances to this great Advocate, and we become his clients, dependents upon him; and in this sense faith may be said *to cast down our accuser by the blood of the Lamb,* by trusting in this great and blessed Advocate, or resigning the important concerns of our souls to his care and faithfulness, to be transacted by him before the bar of God in heaven.

VI. Our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth as our sponsor or *surety;* Heb. vii. 22. *Jesus was made a surety of a better testament,* that is, the new covenant of grace, as manifested in the gospel. A surety is properly one, who undertakes for another to do or suffer something for him, or who undertakes that this other person shall do such services, or suffer such penalties, or enjoy such privileges. So our Lord Jesus Christ has undertaken to answer the demands of the law of God for us who had broken it, to pay a compensation for our violations of the law, and to make peace betwixt God and us. He has also undertaken, that all his people shall be sanctified and brought safely to the heavenly world. So Judah became a surety to his father Jacob for his brother Benjamin, whom he took with him into Egypt. Gen. xliii. 9. *I will be surety for him; of my hands shalt thou require him.* Reuben in the foregoing chapter was in like manner a sponsor for him, verse 37. *Deliver him into my hands, and I will bring him to thee again;* and Joseph bound Simeon in Egypt as a surety for the return of his brethren, and Benjamin with them, *verses* 19, 36.

Now as Christ was our surety, so our salvation may be called a freedom from our obligation to the penal law of God, which our Lord Jesus took upon himself to answer; Rom. vii. 6. *We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held,* Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us,* or freed us *from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* Nor is this obligation of Christ as a sponsor, quite fulfilled till he has brought us all to heaven, and can say to his Father, *Lord, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me;* as Heb. ii. 13. and shall *present us* before the throne *without spot or blemish;* Jude 24, 25. and Eph. v. 25—27. Now faith gives us an interest in all that Jesus Christ has done as our sponsor by trusting ourselves with him entirely under that character, and accepting him as the surety of this everlasting covenant.

VII. Christ is exhibited in scripture as *the second Adam,* as a common head of his people, as a public person, and their representative. This has some difference in it from the former character, though in many respects they agree and coincide. Adam was the head of all his offspring, a common person and representative for them, but not so properly their surety in every sense. Christ is what Adam was; *Rom.* v. 14. 1 *Cor.* xv. 47. Christ is not a common person or representative in his intercession or his advocateship, though he is properly a surety therein, for he has undertaken as a

surety for us, to plead in the court of heaven, and to bring us off with safety and honour: But in his obedience, in his death, and his appearance for us in heaven, he is our common head and representative.

Our salvation in this sense, may be called the glory of God. *Rom.* v. 2. *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God:* And it may be called eternal life. Both these describe the happiness which was promised to man upon his perfect obedience to the law at first. *Rom.* ii. 10. and iii. 23. By sin *we are fallen short of the glory of God;* but we obtain by Jesus Christ salvation with eternal glory. In this sense *Christ is our forerunner* into heaven, and he, as our public representative, *appears there for us*, and has taken up places or mansions in our name; *Heb.* vi. 20. We shall *sit on his throne;* Rev. iii. 21. It is also called *an inheritance*, and we are *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;* Rom. viii. 17. as we are one with him.

Faith accepts of Christ as our common head, or great representative, and gives us an interest in this salvation, by uniting us to Christ, and making us one with him. Christ is the original Son of God, and we are also the *sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus;* Gal. iii. 26. and thus we are coheirs with Christ, he as the head, and we as the members; and faith saves us, as it has been called the bond of union between Christ and us. When we become believers in Christ, whatever was done to Christ as a head or a common person, is then applied to us, either in the right to it, or in the possession of it. Christ was justified from sin, that is, from all imputed sin, at his resurrection, and when we become the seed of Christ by regeneration through faith, *we are justified in him*, much in the same manner as we were condemned in Adam, that is, as soon as we become the sons of Adam by a natural birth: As there is no new actual and particular sentence of condemnation passed upon us at our birth, but we fall under the general condemnation, when we become the sons of Adam, so there is no new act of justification passed by God upon the creature at his regeneration or believing, but the word of God, which is his sentence, pronounces us justified at our faith, or our new birth; and our condemnation is taken away as soon as we are in Christ. Rom. viii. 1. *There is no condemnation now to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

VIII. Another character which Christ sustains, is that of *a Redeemer*, and it is generally represented, both in the scripture and by our divines, as one who redeems us both by power and by price. Now the redemption of us by his powerful grace out of the slavery of Satan, and our own lusts, and our rescue from the temptations of this world, belong rather to the other part of this salvation, wherein his sanctifying influences are necessary and requisite: But when Christ is considered as a Redeemer by price, he frees us by the price of *his own blood* as a ransom, chiefly from the hands of the vindictive justice of God, and from the bonds of the guilt of sin and condemnation, whereby we are held as breakers of the law of God. Yet our redemption from the slavery of sin and Satan may be also attributed to the blood of Christ which purchased sanctifying grace for us. The name of a Redeemer is very applicable to both parts of our salvation. So *he gave his life a ransom for many;* Matt. xx. 28. *He redeemed us from the curse of the law*, by *being made a curse for us;* Gal. iii. 13. He redeemed us also by *his precious blood as of a lamb without blemish or spot, from our vain conversation* or slavery to sin; 1 *Peter* i. 18, 19. And *thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood;* Rev. v. 9.

Salvation in this respect is called *redemption;* Rom. iii. 24. *eternal redemption;* Heb.

ix. 12. and we are said to be *bought with a price;* 1 Cor. vi. 20. and therefore *we are the Lord's and not our own.* Faith applies this benefit to us by our accepting the Lord Jesus Christ under this character as a Redeemer of our persons from this condemnation, or as our great friend who ransomed our souls from imprisonment under the bonds of the condemning law and justice of God, who purchased and ransomed us from our captivity, bonds and miseries in every sense.

IX. To sum up all other characters, I add in the last place, Christ is represented as our great *friend* and benefactor, one who came down from heaven *to seek and to save lost* sinners here on earth: He made a visit to our world to take special notice of all our wants, in order to relieve them all, and to do, and to procure for us whatsoever we stood in need of, in order to our eternal happiness. Under this character he first instructed or taught us the doctrine of our lost estate, and acquainted us with the methods of his salvation; he procured or purchased for us, by his death, not only pardon of sin and future blessedness, but every grace and every blessing which was necessary, in order to our full possession of heaven, and no greater friendship can any man shew to another, *than to lay down his life for* him; *John* xv. 13.

Under this view salvation or *eternal life* is called the *gift of God by Jesus Christ;* Rom. vi. 23. *Abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness in order to reign in life;* Rom. v. 17. He bought again for us our forfeited inheritance in heaven. Observe this notion of Christ as a benefactor respects his doing every kindness, and procuring or purchasing every blessing for us, and bestowing it upon us; whereas in the character of a *Redeemer* he bought or purchased our persons from imprisonment and condemnation.

Faith gives us an interest in these blessings of Christ as a benefactor, when it comes to him, and seeks them at his hand, when it humbly depends upon Christ for them, and trusts in him to bestow them. Thus our faith is like a hand, whereby we receive these blessings which Christ has to bestow, or like the feet, whereby we come or fly to Christ to partake of them; or it may be likened to the voice of petition, whereby we seek them at his hands, and *call upon the Lord* to bestow them.

Thus I have briefly run through many of the scriptural characters or offices, whereby our Lord Jesus Christ is represented to us, whereby our salvation is set forth, and whereby our faith is described as the appointed means of our interest in them. It is evident enough they often run into one another, nor did the gospel ever design that these several representations of Christ, of his salvation and of our faith, should be kept so separate by exact logical forms of expression, as to please scholastic readers only; but that plain sincere souls, under a sense of guilt and condemnation, might see and view them on every side, and might find something in Christ, suited to their sensation of their own wants and miseries, and apply themselves to him for relief; but this shall be the subject of the next section.

SECTION III.

THE REASONS WHY CHRIST AND HIS SALVATION MAY BE REPRESENTED TO US UNDER THESE VARIOUS CHARACTERS.

The great God was pleased to send his own Son Jesus Christ to save us by these various characters or offices, and to represent him to us under so many relations, emblems or figures borrowed from the things of men, perhaps for such reasons as these:

I. That those attributes of the divine nature, *viz.* his wisdom, his power, his justice, his mercy, his faithfulness, &c. which could not have so full an illustration one way, or under one expression or metaphor, might have another. God is said to be *just* and kind, *and faithful* in the *forgiveness of* our *sins* through the blood of Christ. He is *just* in bestowing this blessing upon us, since Christ has become our sacrifice of atonement, and made full satisfaction for our offences: He is kind or merciful in appointing such a forgiveness for us, and sending his own Son to purchase or procure it: He is *faithful* in fulfilling his promise made to Jesus Christ, in the covenant of redemption, and bestowing upon us what Christ our benefactor has purchased for us. His wisdom also and his goodness are rendered more conspicuous to us in contriving and effecting our salvation, in assuring it to us, and bestowing it upon us in so many different ways and manners.

II. That our Lord Jesus Christ might be the better known by us, and the more endeared to us, by sustaining these various offices and relations; and that we might be able to borrow some further ideas, and some clearer knowledge of these divine and important things of our salvation, from many of the common affairs and occurrences of life. When the blessed God has taken so much care to provide such a Saviour for us, and such an illustrious salvation, he is very desirous that we should view it on all sides, and be more thoroughly acquainted with it, as well as with that blessed person by whom he prepares and bestows it.

III. That all sorts of persons, of whatsoever temper or capacity, whatsoever want or difficulty they are in, might have wherewith to suit them and their circumstances; that every son and daughter of Adam, in their various ranks of life, might all learn the way to receive this Saviour, and lay hold on this salvation of Christ, and that he might render it easy and familiar to us by so many common similitudes, or parallels drawn from the things of common life: And thus those who know not how to apply themselves to Christ one way, might do it another.

As for instance, some poor feeble creatures who are convinced of sin, and ready to perish, perhaps may not know how to apply or address themselves to Christ, as a *Surety*, or as a *Sacrifice*, or as a *Redeemer*, &c. for these things are done already, and in a great measure were finished long ago; but the meanest and poorest creatures can easily learn how to apply to Christ as a *Mediator*, to do something for them that is yet to be done, *to reconcile them to God*, and to bring them into his presence with comfort; or as *a high-priest* of intercession, or as *an advocate* to plead for them before the throne of God, and their faith can wait on Christ, can call upon him, and trust in him to make intercession for them in the virtue of his blood, or to present his blood before the Father as an atonement for their sins, to appear before God for them as their great friend in heaven, to become their Mediator, Peace-maker or Reconciler, to bring them into the favour of God.

Those who are infants, or *babes in Christ*, may thus be nourished *by the sincere milk of the word*, and with diet fitted for their feeble capacity, when they are not sufficiently grown to bear *stronger meat*, as the apostle expresses himself; *Heb.* v. 12—14. whereas those who are well grown christians, and, in the sense of the apostle, may be called perfect, may know better how to converse with Christ as their great representative, they may *know* and rejoice in *him, and in the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering*, and be made *conformable unto his death;* but those that are in a lower form

may not have their apprehensions so well cleared, and so much raised at present, although afterwards God *may reveal also these things unto them;* Phil. iii. 10, 15.

IV. Christ is set forth under these various characters, that as our understanding in the things of religion, and in the graces and glories of Christ increases, we might take the faster hold of Christ, if I might so express it, and that we might have more various exercises of our faith, and more numerous evidences of the truth of our faith, and secure to ourselves more solid ground of hope, when we can view him in all these relations, and our faith can receive or lay hold of him under all these forms. Thus we may hereby obtain double and treble confirmation of our faith and comfort; *Heb.* vi. 17, 18. God gives us both his *promise* and his *oath*, to secure salvation to us; *he swears* in order to confirm what he had promised *that by* several *immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled to lay hold of the hope set before us.*

Thus has God been pleased also to do in the various representations he has made of Christ Jesus our Saviour, that our meditations and prayers, our hopes and dependencies, and indeed all the pious exercises of our souls towards Christ, might have a rich variety for our entertainment, support, and joy; and therefore the apostles have *written these things unto* the disciples of Christ, *that their joy might be full;* 1 John i. 4. I add fifthly, another reason is,

V. That God our Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour might have the larger revenues of glory from us, and receive honour from our hands in a rich variety, that we might have our *thank-offerings* rising up to God and the Lamb, in many forms of adoration and expression; that we might bless our dear Redeemer, rejoice in him, and do honour to his name under all those happy representations of his grace and glory, in which he has set himself before us in the gospel:—The last reason I will add, shall be this:

VI. That in all ages the followers of Christ might have a more clear and easy relief from those difficulties and controversies which may attend these great doctrines of our salvation, and which might darken and perplex the way whereby God has appointed us to be made partakers of this blessing.

SECTION IV.

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH ARE RELIEVED BY THIS VARIOUS REPRESENTATION OF THE SALVATION OF CHRIST.

Since God has set forth our blessed Saviour with his salvation, and our faith which interests us therein, under so many various characters and expressions, the following difficulties will be very much relieved hereby, and several controversies abolished.

I. A christian who reads these things in his Bible, cannot say that Christ has saved us in this particular manner, and therefore he did not save us in the other; as for instance, When we read or assert that Christ was put to death for us, as *a sacrifice for our sins*, we cannot say, therefore he did not save us as *a High Priest:* Or when we read or assert that he saved us as our High Priest, we cannot say, therefore he was not a sacrifice; for the scriptures assure us, Christ himself is both the High Priest and the

sacrifice also; Eph. v. 2. Christ *hath given himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God.* Again,

One christian will perhaps be ready to maintain, that Christ saves us as a great friend and benefactor, who has, by the price of his blood, purchased the blessings of grace and glory for us, and bestows them upon us; another may choose to fix his eye more upon Christ as a Redeemer, and say, he has bought or purchased our persons from the hands of divine justice, or he has redeemed us from the curse of the *law*, and from the bonds wherein we, as criminals, were held by the law of God: But neither of them should dare to say, he bought or purchased these blessings for us, and therefore he did not purchase our persons; for he has done both these under different characters.

Yet further, one christian may delight more to fix his eye and hope on Christ as *a surety* or representative of his elect, or of those whom he certainly and finally saves, and on that account he suffered death particularly in their room and stead, and secured to them certain deliverance and salvation; yet he cannot therefore affirm, that Christ did not, in any sense, *die for all men*, as a general friend of man, or suffer death for their good; nor can he say, that the benefits of his death do not any way reach to all mankind. Another perhaps will say since *all are dead, he died for all* as a common *Mediator between God and man*, or as a general benefactor to procure conditional salvation for all men, and offer it to them if they are willing to come to him and receive it; but he cannot say that he was not a proper surety, or representative of his elect, whereby he has secured certain salvation to them only: For as I have shewn in former papers, that he by his righteousness and death has directly and absolutely procured this salvation for his elect, as their head and representative, but yet he has also procured salvation, with all the glories of it, conditionally, for the rest of mankind, upon which foundation these blessings are offered to all men in the gospel.

II. There is another sort of difficulty from which these various representations of the salvation of Christ may deliver and relieve us. *viz.* The actions or the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, have not precisely the same relation, character, or effect, with regard to one of his offices, as they have with regard to another; and therefore what is pronounced safely, with regard to the death of Christ under one character, cannot be with safety pronounced concerning it under another. As for example, When so glorious and illustrious a person as Jesus Christ appears as our friend and benefactor, he paid so sublime a price by his death and sufferings, as in a strict sense to satisfy or make full recompence for all our violations of the law of God, and to merit pardon and eternal life at the hand of God for us: But when we consider him merely as our representative, or our surety, and to answer what the law demanded of us, he cannot be so properly said to merit our pardon, or to make full and abundant recompence to the justice of God for our offences; for this might lead or encourage persons to infer, that we ourselves have satisfied God, or made recompence to him in the person of Christ, or that we have merited our pardon and our salvation, because what he did entirely as our representative, we may in some sort be esteemed to have done in and by him.

Again, the death of Christ as *a surety* and the *second Adam* was his suffering of *the curse of the law*, and the penalty thereof in our stead, which we had incurred; and in this view his death and his dereliction, or being forsaken of the Father, was the *idem*, or same which sinners should have suffered; though in other respects, and when we consider him as a glorious Mediator, or super-eminent benefactor, then he appears with

all the dignity of his indwelling godhead, and in this sense he paid a price of superior value, his death is the *tantundem;* and more; he makes an abundant compensation for sin, and a satisfaction to the demands of the law, and honours the justice of God more than our everlasting punishment could do, and hereby he merits for us those blessings which are above all our reach, or pretences, or obligations to procure or merit for ourselves. Again, as he was a Redeemer, his death is a price paid for our souls to divine justice, in order to release us from the bonds of condemnation: But his death as a benefactor, may be rather considered as a price for the blessings which he purchased for us, and of which we are made partakers through him.

III. There are other difficulties which are started among the several controversies of christians with regard to our faith, and the way and manner whereby this faith interests us in Christ and his salvation: And since Christ has sustained so many characters and offices, and stands in so many relations to us, our faith is exercised towards him in a correspondency to each of these relations and characters; and therefore when we read or assert that our faith saves us in this way, or under this logical relation, we dare not therefore assert, that it cannot save us in any other way, or under another logical relation. I would endeavour to make this thing a little more clear, because there have many controversies arisen upon this head. Let us then briefly recollect or take a short survey of the several representations which are given us of faith in Christ, according to these different characters of our blessed Saviour.

Faith in its most general sense, nature and design, as it refers to Jesus Christ, is the application or address of the soul to Christ, or to God by him, under any or all these characters, whereby he and his salvation are set forth in scripture. Now these characters being so very different and various, require different manners of address to him, which are represented in scripture, which perhaps may be all included in faith taken in its largest sense, together with those necessary acts of the soul which must accompany, attend, or follow it.

Particularly then faith is sometimes represented by *believing his gospel:* Mark i. 15. *Repent and believe the gospel:* But here it is supposed, that all the proper and sanctifying effects of this faith must attend it, and it must not rest in a mere assent. It is a *knowledge of* Christ; John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God,* and Jesus Christ *whom thou hast sent.* Isaiah liii. 11. *By his knowledge,* or the knowledge of him, *shall he justify many:* And here I might add, that this our knowledge requires a correspondent practice, otherwise it will be of no more avail towards salvation, than the knowledge of devils, *who believe and tremble;* James ii. 19. It is a *believing in* Christ, which perhaps ought rather to be rendered *trusting in Christ;* Isaiah xi. 10. compared with Rom. xv. 12. *In him shall the gentiles trust.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, or trusted.* Eph. i. 12, 13. *Who first trusted in* Christ, *or hoped in him,* as in the original.

Believing in his name; John i. 12. *To them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name.* Seeking to him, Isaiah xi. 10. *To him shall the gentiles seek.* Receiving Christ, John i. 12. *To as many as received him,*—Col. ii. 6. As you have received Christ,—*so walk in him.* Laying hold of Christ; Isaiah xxvii. 5. *Let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me.* Heb. vi. 18. *Those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them.* Hearing of Christ, or hearken-

ing to him; Luke ix. 35. *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him, or hearken unto him.* Calling upon Christ, Rom. x. 12, 13. *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Coming unto Christ, Matt. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour, &c.* John v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.* Flying to him for refuge; *Heb.* vi. 18. as before. Looking unto Christ, or beholding him, Isaiah xlv. 25. *Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be saved.* Isaiah lxv. 1. *I said, behold me, behold me, to a nation not called by my name.* Obeying Christ, *Heb.* v. 9. *He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.* Believing in God through Christ; 1 Pet. i. 21. *Who by him do believe in God.* Coming to God by Christ; John xiv. 6. *No man cometh to the Father but by me.*

Thus you see faith, together with its various concomitants, or consequent exercises of soul, is represented as our address or application to Christ for salvation by and with almost all the senses or powers of nature: It is looking to him with the eye, it is hearkening to him with the ear, it is receiving or laying hold of him with the hand, it is coming to him with the feet, it is knowledge of him in the head, trust in him with the heart, calling upon him with the tongue, and obeying him with all the powers of soul and body.

Now it is well known, that there have been great disputes about the particular influence which this act of faith has, in order to interest us in the salvation of Christ: And here I will readily grant, that the word faith primarily and chiefly implies such a knowledge of Christ, such a belief of his gospel, such a sense of our wants, and his sufficiency to supply them, as leads the soul to receive him under any of those characters in which the gospel sets him forth, and more particularly to trust in him for this salvation:* But there are many poor souls who have learned sincerely to address themselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, by one or two of these characters and representations of faith, but were never carried on so far as explicitly to make an address to Christ, under all his distinct relations, or to perform every one of these actions in their addresses to Christ: And can I suppose where the soul is very sincere in its desires of the whole salvation of Christ, both in the holiness and happiness of it, and seeks it from him, that such souls shall be excluded, because they have not well learned all the metaphors and figures under which these sacred things are exhibited in the gospel?

Again, on the other hand, if one should say, faith saves us as it is an eye to look to Christ that we may be saved, he cannot thence infer it does not save us as an ear to hearken to him, as a hand to lay hold of him, or as a tongue to call upon him, or a heart to trust in him. Again, if another should say, faith saves us as an instrument† to receive Christ, and his righteousness and grace, he cannot argue that it does not save us, as it is a condition, or a term of our being accepted of God through him;

* It may be observed here, that almost every character or action, whereby faith in Christ is represented in scripture, carries in it the notion of trust, hope, or dependance, so that the original and most proper sense of the word "faith" is still maintained, and every sinner who sincerely applies himself to Christ for salvation, does certainly put forth an act of trust or hope in him, though he may not always so evidently and distinctly apprehend and judge of the inward acts of his own soul, or distinguish them so exactly.

† Perhaps there have been no greater quarrels upon this subject than amongst those who have maintained that faith saves us as it is an instrument, whereby we receive Christ and his righteousness, and those who assert it is a condition upon which Christ has appointed us to be interested in his blessings: And though I think they may both be true, according to the representation I have made in this and other of these essays; yet we have no great reason to be fond of either of these terms, especially when they are made a matter of controversy, because they are neither of them the expressions of scripture, which is our supreme rule of instruction in the matters of salvation.

or if another should say, faith saves us, as it is a laying hold of his person, or as a bond of union between Christ and us, yet he cannot argue, therefore faith does not save us, as it is a looking or seeking to him from afar off, or as it is a *calling upon the name of the Lord.* God has been pleased in many ways to manifest these most important things of our salvation, and revealed them to us in a variety of human expressions, similitudes, actions, and relations, that the poorest and the weakest christian might have support and encouragement for his hope.

Conclusion: It is confessed, that these thoughts are not sufficiently digested into perfect form, nor put together with all that accuracy as theological controversies require; but my sense and meaning in them is pretty obvious and evident: Perhaps this design might be more improved and promoted much farther by a wiser head, and a better pen: and it might assist the solution of many difficulties, and relieve the quarrels and contentions of different parties to a greater degree; for it is evident, that the characters which our blessed Lord sustains, and the exercises of our faith, on him are very various, and we are made partakers of this salvation, perhaps as many ways as our acts of faith bear different respects to the several blessed characters and offices which Christ sustains, in order to our salvation. *Now, to him who has redeemed us by power* and by *price;* to him who has saved us by his blood and his Spirit; to him who has purchased our souls from the bondage of the law, and from death and hell, and has purchased for us the blessings of grace, the pardon of our sins, and an inheritance in heaven, *be glory and honour* in endless varieties, and eternal praises from all the redeemed. *Amen.*

ESSAY VII.

AGAINST UNCHARITABLENESS, WHEREIN THE SECRET SPRINGS OF THAT VICE ARE TRACED, AND THE MISCHIEVOUS EFFECTS OF IT BRIEFLY SURVEYED.

Written to Expose that most Unchristian Iniquity of Censures, Revilings, and Church-Anathemas, on the Account of Smaller Disputables in Christianity.

ROM. xiv. 3.

LET NOT HIM WHICH EATETH NOT, JUDGE HIM THAT EATETH: FOR GOD HATH RECEIVED HIM.

LUKE ix. 54, 55.

HIS DISCIPLES—SAID, LORD, WILT THOU THAT WE COMMAND FIRE TO COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND CONSUME THEM?—BUT HE TURNED AND REBUKED THEM, AND SAID, YE KNOW NOT WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT YE ARE OF.

——" Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?
" Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum?"

INTRODUCTION.

CHARITY in the soul of man is the very picture of the godhead, taken as it stands in the fairest light. Wisdom and holiness, power, sovereignty, and justice, are various features of the Deity: They are indeed his very nature and essence; yet the scripture rather chooses to express, that *God is love*, and that twice in one chapter, 1 John iv. 8. and 16. *The beloved disciple that leaned on the bosom of Jesus*, took peculiar delight in the contemplation of God, under this character. This appears in his gospel, as well as in his epistle. The other glories of that infinite beauty shine with awful beams, and command my reverence: But methinks, I love to look upon so glorious a being, in his most condescending air, and to converse with him in his mildest and most inviting aspect.

Charity in man is a grace of that alluring sweetness, that my pen would fain be attempting to say something in favour of it: I find a strange pleasure in discoursing of this virtue, hoping that my very soul may be moulded into its divine likeness. I would always feel it inwardly warming my heart. I would have it look through my eyes continually, and it should be ever ready upon my lips to soften every expression of my tongue. I would dress myself in it as my best raiment. I would put it on upon my faith and hope, not so as entirely to hide them, but as an upper and more visible vesture, constantly to appear in among men. For our christian charity is to evidence our other virtues.

Uncharitableness is a loathsome part of the image of the fallen angel: It is a-kin to the hatred of God. *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen;* 1 John iv. 20. He that hates his fellow-christian, and brings railing accusations against him for a difference in little opinions, how can he expect to be beloved of God, who beholds in the best of us so many monstrous follies, and guilt of a more aggravated nature? By the word *uncharitableness* here, I would not include our neglect of charity to the poor and hungry, nor our aversion to errors of the grosser kind; but I mean our aversion to such persons who not only profess to be christians, but who also agree with us in the chief doctrines of christianity, *viz.* the pardon of our sins by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the sanctification of men by the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of faith in Christ, and good works, &c. I mean our aversion to those who differ from us in little punctilios of doctrine or duty which are not expressly and plainly written in the New Testament; those who maintain such an aversion to their fellow-christians, as to pronounce damnation upon them, or some terrible and unchristian censures, because they do not come up to our sentiments and practices in things which are of little moment, while we agree in all fundamental points, and such as are of most importance. This uncharitableness is a vice attended with such a train of mischiefs, that I would set all my biggest powers in array to fight against it. *It is a fountain of such bitter waters,* that I would fain dam up the spring. It is a plant of so poisonous a product, that I would dig deep and search for the roots, and tear up all the fibres of it, though they twined about my heart-strings.

SECTION I.

THE CAUSES OF UNCHARITABLENESS.

AN uncharitable humour springs generally from some of these following causes:

I. From *a malicious constitution of nature, an acrimonious or a choleric temper of blood.* There are some animal engines of human flesh, that have their juices all soured in their very formation; and there is an ill ferment raised in such persons at the perception of every object that is not just suited to their present fancy and inclination: And by the hard laws of union between soul and body in this our fallen state, the spirit too often complies with the fretful distempers of the flesh. There are but few that attempt to suppress the ferment, and to resist the angry motions of the animal; and of those few that attempt it, scarce one in ten is very successful: For it is a work of toil and difficulty, perpetual watchfulness and unceasing prayer.

This ill humour mixes itself with religion, as well as with civil affairs. It diffuses its malignity through all the studies and the manners of the man, and gives a visible tincture to his notions and his practices. *Furio* can never converse about the calmest and most speculative points of divinity, but his indignation kindles against every different opinion, his fiery temper breaks out and blazes, and he bestows on his own deportment the honourable names of shining light and burning zeal. His peevish and angry passions are so blended with his understanding, that hard names are his best arguments; most convincing to himself, though they are the just scorn of the wise. He stabs his brethren that differ from him to the heart, with pointed railing: and from

an aversion to an opinion rises to an immortal hatred of the person. If our great Creator has united any of our souls to bodies that are less infected with this vicious juice, we have reason to adore his sovereign goodness.

II. *Self-love and pride, and a vain conceit of our own opinions,* is another spring of uncharitable carriages. Did you ever see a weak and humble soul sensible of its own poverty and ignorance, and ready to esteem others above himself, easily indulge this uncharitable humour? Alas! poor foolish mankind is very prone to esteem itself wise and knowing. Little *Laudillus,* who is almost always in the wrong, has much ado to persuade himself, that he was ever capable of mistaking. He secretly thinks all his opinions to be divine truths, and therefore he is very lavish in pronouncing error and heresy upon every notion and practice that differs from his own. He takes the freedom to choose a religion for himself, but he allows no man besides the same liberty. He is sure that he has reason to dissent from others, but no man has reason to dissent from him. He sets up for infallibility without a triple crown, and fixes a see of ecclesiastical sovereignty on this side the water. He awes some slavish spirits into submission, and they become treacherous to their own souls and to the rights of human nature, by delivering up their faith and consciences to his imperious dictates: Then the man grows haughty, surly and severe, especially if he be advanced to any degree of honour and authority in the church. Then in his inflexible justice he delivers up the humble and inquisitive christian unto Satan, because he cannot assent and consent to all and every thing contained in his scheme; and he teaches perhaps his elder brethren the doctrines and discipline of the gospel, as Gideon did the elders of Succoth, *with the briars and thorns of the wilderness;* Judges viii. 16.

III. This hateful vice may be derived from a third original; and that is *a constant and friendly acquaintance with the men and books of our own opinion, and an avoidance of all the writers and persons that differ from us.* This has a mighty influence to beget and maintain uncharitable notions; yet this is the constant practice, not only of the unlearned, but of too many of the learned world. *Hermes* sits all the year in his own cell, and never looks abroad beyond the clan of his own fraternity: *Hermes* reads the controversies as they are described only by one party, and disputes them over only in the books that are written on one side. He finds a great appearance of argument and scripture there, and then proclaims it impossible that the adverse party should shew equal reason or revelation: And thus he proceeds to censure them as *men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith,* and twisting *the scriptures to their own damnation.* Cicero in his treatise "De natura deorum," marks this humour, and brands it, *Vestra solem legitis, vestra amatis, cæteros causa incognita condemnatis.**

But let you and I, my friend, who delight in charity, let us converse a little with authors that differ from our present opinions, and we shall see their sentiments dressed up so plausibly, and set in so fair a light, that might easily persuade men of sincere consciences to embrace them; and this will prevent us from censorious thoughts concerning our candid adversaries, and their disciples. There is scarce any thing that enlarges the mind more, and more disengages it from narrow and selfish principles, than a free converse with the virtuous and ingenious of all parties.

There is a memorable story to this purpose, concerning two neighbours in an

* "You read only your own books, you love only your own, and you condemn others before you know sufficient reason, for want of knowing their opinions."

unsociable town, who were always quarrelling about the private meeting and the parish-church: Both places of worship in that town were well supplied with preachers of good sense and serious religion: But each of them was the subject of unmerciful reproach between these two neighbours, whensoever they met, and their different methods of worship were mutually reviled; the one as formal and spiritless, the other as enthusiastical and indecent: At last *Pacifico* their common friend persuaded them to hear each others minister, and accompanied them both one day to their different assemblies; and they were both surprized to hear the gospel preached with a due degree of decency and fervour, both at meeting and at church: And though they continued still to adhere to their own party, as judging it, in somere spects, suited best to their edification; yet they maintained hearty friendship, with each other, and delightful society in religious conference: Thus the quarrelsome mistake was rectified by better acquaintance: They lived many years together in peace; they composed the animosities of different parties, that dwelt in the town; they died in perfect charity, and left a sweet influence behind them, and a honourable example.

IV. A fourth spring of uncharitableness is, *our reading the word of God with a whole set of notions established before-hand:* And yet how common a method, and how constant is this? *Diæcion* has long ago determined, that bishops must be superior to presbyters; he has received ordination from episcopal hands: and hopes one day himself to be capable of ordaining others. Thus while he is growing up towards the mitre, he reads the scriptures only to confirm his own determined opinions. He stretches and torments many an unwilling text, to make it speak the language of his own thoughts. He neglects the passages that favour all other forms of government and methods of ministration; or else he constrains them to mean episcopacy too: Every word that he reads, hath a diocesan aspect; and the first verse of Genesis can prove prelacy, for ought I know, as it has been able heretofore to demonstrate papacy, when *In principio creavit Deus cœlum et terram*, decided the controversy, and set the pope above the emperor: For God made all things from one beginning, and not from two.

Synodias reads the Bible with a presbyterian glass, and *Fratrio* with a congregational optic: They can find nothing there but their own opinions, and both of them wonder that *Diæcion* should not see them too. *Fratrio* turns over the scriptures with great diligence and meditation, and as often as he finds the word "church" there, he thinks of nothing but a congregation of faithful men; as the church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, are so many single congregations. When *Synodias* meets the same word in his Bible, he is often in the midst of an assembly of divines; and especially when any power is attributed to the church, he is sure it must intend a classis of presbyters, or consistory of elders. When the same word falls under the eye of *Diæcion* in his course of reading the New Testament, he cannot imagine any thing is meant short of a diocess: All his churches are or should be as big as counties or shires. And I might add, that when poor *Parochianus* the mason finds leisure to read a chapter, and lights upon the mention of a church in it, he thinks immediately of a tall stone building with a steeple upon it, a bell or two, and a weather-cock. I might give the like instances of many other terms and expressions in scripture, to which men have unalterably fixed their several different ideas, and raised consequences from them, and interpret the word

of God by them, without enquiring whether their ideas are comformable to the sense in which the scripture uses those expressions: And then it is no wonder that their schemes of ecclesiastical government are so different: And yet each of these prepossessed opiniators think their own exposition of the text so evident, that they chide the perverseness of all other men, as though they were resolved to wink against the light. It is like a person of a fretful constitution, whose eyes are also tinged with the jaundice, he quarrels with every man that he meets, because he will not consent to call all things yellow. Thus by the false light of affection in which they behold some beloved texts, and their negligence of all others, or at least by the colours of prejudice that they throw upon them, each triumphs in his own sentiments, and pronounces the apostles and prophets of his side. Then he lets fly many a sharp invective against all the men that presume to oppose him; for in his sense they oppose the apostles themselves, and fight against the authority of God.

But when a man takes a Bible into his hand without a preconceived scheme in his head, and though he may make use of systems to secure himself from inconsistencies, yet he puts them not in the place of the holy scriptures, but resolves to form his body of divinity by the New Testament, and derive all his opinions and practices thence: he will then find so many expressions that seem to favour the several contending parties of christians, that in some points he will perhaps be tempted to doubt of all opinions, and sometimes have much ado to secure himself from the danger of eternal scepticism: When in any doubtful point his judgment is led to a determination, it is always with great caution, and by slow degrees: He is not carried by violence to any dogmatical conclusion; he is modest in his assertions, and gentle towards all whose judgment and conscience have determined them another way, because he met with so many probable arguments on their side, in the time of his dubitation and enquiry that had almost fixed his opinion the same way too.

If I may be permitted to speak of myself, I might acquaint the world with my own experience. After some years spent in the perusal of controversial authors, and finding them insufficient to settle my judgment and conscience in some great points of religion, I resolved to seek a determination of my thoughts from the epistles of St. Paul, and especially in that weighty doctrine of justification: I perused his letter to the Romans in the original, with the most fixed meditation, laborious study, and importunate requests to God, for several months together; First without consulting any commentator, and afterwards called in the assistance of the best critics and interpreters. I very narrowly observed the daily motions of my own mind: I found it very hard to root out old prejudices, and to escape the danger of new ones: I met with some expressions of the apostle that swayed me towards one opinion, and others that inclined the balance of my thoughts another way, and it was no easy matter to maintain my judgment in an equal poise, till some just and weighty argument gave the determination; so many crossing notions, perplexing difficulties and seeming repugnances lay in my way, that I most heartily bless the divine goodness that enabled me at last to surmount them all, and established my judgment and conscience in that glorious and forsaken doctrine of the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, by the *imputation* of a perfect *righteousness*, which is not originally his own.

From my own experiment I can easily guess what confounding intricacies of thought others pass through in their honest searches after truth. These conflicts did exceedingly

enlarge my soul, and stretched my charity to a vast extent. I see, I feel, and am assured that several men may be very sincere, and yet entertain notions in divinity, all widely different. I confess now and then some opinions, or some unhappy occurrences are ready to narrow and confine my affections again, if I am not watchful over myself; but *I pray God* to preserve upon my heart a strong and lasting remembrance of those days and those studies, whereby he laid within me the foundation of so broad a charity.

V. *Fifthly.* Another cause of uncharitableness, is *a want of reflection on the grounds of our own opinions.* We should be more just to ourselves, and more gentle to others, if we did but impartially review the reasons why we first embraced our several principles and practices. Perhaps it was education determined most of them, then let us chide ourselves severely for building upon so careless and slight a bottom: Or let us be civil to the greatest part of mankind, who came by all their principles the same way. Perhaps we were led into particular notions by the authority of persons whom we reverence or love; then we should not upbraid our neighbours that have been influenced into different sentiments by the same springs. Perhaps we have felt interest sometimes ready to bias our thoughts, and give us a secret inclination or aversion to a party; let us then pity the frailty of human nature, and have compassion upon men whose judgments are exposed to so mean a bribery, and sometimes have been warped aside from the truth. Or finally, perhaps it was deep meditation, a daily search into scripture, and fervent prayer were the methods by which we pursued knowledge, and established our principles upon solid reason. Let us then be so charitable to those whom we contend with, as to suppose they sought after truth the same way, and then our contentions will have less fire and spleen in them, less of clamour and indignation against those that differ from us.

The true reason why we kindle our anger against our christian brethren that are not entirely of our party is, because we not only have the vanity to fancy ourselves always in the right, and them in the wrong; but we judge their consciences and their sincerity too, that they did not come honestly and fairly by their principles, while we never consider how we ourselves came by our own. But there are still more ways to arrive at this uncharitable temper: I must proceed to

VI. *Sixthly.* Which is a common method, and thus to be performed. If we will but *trace the principles of those that dissent from us through all the length of remote and feeble consequences, and be sure to find some terrible absurdity at the end of them,* we shall not easily maintain our charity. O how often do we put their opinions upon the rack! we torture every joint and article of them, till we have forced them to confess some formidable errors which their authors never knew or dreamed of: Thus the original notions appear with a frightful aspect, and the sectators of them grow to be the object of our abhorrence, and have forfeited their right to every grain of our charity.

Evangillo believes that Christ Jesus has completely answered the demands of the law in order to our justification, and that in the room and stead of all believers. *Nomineus* hears this doctrine, and thus begins his chain of severe and false deductions; then, saith he, the law has no power to demand obedience of us; then we are not to be charged with sin, though we break the law hourly and profanely; then we may contemn all the commands, sport with the threatenings, and defy God the law-giver and the avenger. He proceeds then to pronounce *Evangillo* a wicked antinomian, and *in the name of the*

Lord delivers him up to Satan, that he may learn not to blaspheme; 1 Tim. i. 20. *Evangillo*, on the other hand, who has been well instructed in the way of salvation, and has learned the duties of faith and hope, but is not yet so well improved in the charity of the gospel, hears *Nomineus* preaching up repentance and sincere obedience, as the conditions of our justification and acceptance with God to eternal life: He smites his breast with his hand, and cries, Surely this man knows no use of Christ in our religion, he makes void his righteousness and his death, he is a mere legalist, a papist, a rank socinian, *he preaches another gospel, and though he were an angel from heaven let him be accursed;* Gal. i. 8, 9. Thus when men dress up their neighbours in all the strained consequences of their opinions, with a malicious pleasure they pursue this thread of argument, they impose horrid conclusions which can never be drawn from their doctrines, and never leave the pursuit till they have pushed each other to blasphemy and damnation. Whereas, if the doctrines and the persons now mentioned were put into the balances of truth and charity, perhaps the principles of *Evangillo* would be found to have most weight of scripture on their side, and *Nomineus* more of the fair shews of reasoning: But neither the one would be found to throw Christ out of his religion, nor the other to *make void the law:* And both of their lives would appear shining in holiness, but that they want the bright garments of charity. Let me name

VII. A seventh spring of this uncharitable humour; and that is, *when we magnify circumstantial differences into substantial ones, and make every punctilio of our own scheme a fundamental point,* as though all *the law and the prophets hung upon it,* as though it were *the ground and pillar of all the truth* in the gospel. *Crucius* will not allow his dissenting neighbour to be a member of the christian church, because he separates from the modes of worship in the church of England; he cannot believe him to be a friend to Christ crucified, because he refuses to have his child baptized with the airy sign of the cross. Again the dissenting neighbour pronounces *Crucius* to be a mere formalist, and to have nothing of the Spirit of God in him, because he seeks not much to obtain the gifts of the Spirit, and scarce ever addresses himself to God in prayer without the assistance of a form.

Sabbaptes, that lives within two doors of them, will not believe either of his neighbours to be a christian, because they have never been plunged under water, that is, in his sense they were never baptized: And both of them in requital agree to call *Sabbaptes* a Jew, because he worships only on a Saturday. Whereas the all-knowing God looks down into all their hearts, beholds the graces that his Spirit hath wrought there, owns them all for his children and the disciples of his Son, though they are not yet *perfect in love.* They have all one common *God and Father, one Lord Jesus, one faith, one spirit* of prayer, *one baptism,* though they quarrel so bitterly about times, and modes, and forms.

It is a very uncharitable practice to think that a man can never journey safely to heaven unless his hat and shoes be of the same colour with ours, unless he tread the very track of our feet, and his footsteps too be of the same size. It is a censorious and perverse fancy to pronounce a man no christian because every thought of his soul, and all the atoms of his brain are not just ranged in the same posture with mine. How ridiculously unreasonable is it for a man of brown hair to shut his brother out from the rank and species of men, and call him an ox or a lion, because his locks are black or yellow, I am persuaded there is a breadth in the narrow road to heaven, and persons

may travel more than seven a breast in it: And though they do not trace precisely the same track, yet all look to the same Saviour Jesus, and all arrive at the same common salvation: And though their names may be crossed out of the records of a particular church on earth, where *charity fails*, yet they will *be found written in the Lamb's book of life*, which is a record of eternal love, and shall for ever be joined to the fellowship of the catholic church in heaven. This iniquity of uncharitableness has more springs than there are streams or branches belonging to the great river of Egypt: and it is as fruitful of serpents and monsters too: Itself is a Hydra of many heads; I have drawn seven of them out at length into open light, that they may be cut off for ever: But there are others still remain as full of fire and infection. Shall I mention

VIII. An eighth here, *the applause of a party, and the advance of self-interest?* Have we never observed what a mighty prevalence this has over the hearts and tongues of men, and inflames them with malice against their neighbours? They assault every different opinion with rage and clamour: They rail at the persons of all other parties to ingratiate themselves with their own: and when they find their account in it, their tongues are sharpened as drawn swords; they fight for honour like young volunteers, or like the Switzers for pay. When they tear away men from their habitations, cast them into noisome prisons, and put to death the ministers of the gospel, they boast, like *Jehu* when he slew the priests of Baal, *Come and see my zeal for the Lord;* 2 Kings x. 16. And as he designed hereby to establish *the kingdom in his own hands*, so they to maintain the preferments and possessions, as well as the reputation they had acquired among their own sect. But ah! How little do they think of the wounds that Jesus the Lord receives by every bitter reproach they cast on his followers! Nor will it be found a sufficient reason for the persecution of them one day, that they did not conform to human inventions. The *Jansenists* in France have made some reformation in the doctrines of popery, and they have been sometimes traduced for approaching the tents of *Calvin:* They have been in danger of being degraded and losing their spiritual dignities, and they are pushed on by this fear and ambition, to write at every turn some severe invectives against the calvinists, to shew that themselves are true sons of that uncharitable church of Rome.

Sicco has lately departed from a baptist society, and he hardly thinks himself sufficiently *come out of the water*, till he is kindled into a flame against all those that baptize by immersion; he rails at his former brethren, to make the presbyterian and independent churches believe that he is a true convert: How art thou mistaken, poor *Sicco*, to attempt this method of caressing thy new acquaintance? For they had rather receive a baptist into their fellowship, whose faith and holiness are conspicuous in his life, than open their doors to an uncharitable wretch that proves his conversion only by the change of an opinion, and placing his religion in railing.

Acerbion has left the communion of his Father, and is become an ecclesiastic of high note in a more powerful and splendid church: He seldom puts a volume into the press without sourness and hard words in it, against the society which he has forsaken: His pen is dipped in gall daily, and he grows old in malice and censure: It is pity he should so far expose the church to which he now belongs, as to think that she will esteem him a more dutiful son, by how much the less charity he has for his dissenting brethren. And I am sorry also that there should be a church in Great Britain which has devoted christians to the devil for little differences, and has exposed them to tedious and sharp

sufferings, for refusing to submit to particular gestures in worship, and airy signs, for wearing a short garment in prayer in the place of a long one, or black instead of white; and some of her sons have delighted to execute these censures, when they have found much *gain* arising from this severe *godliness*. I could wish she had always exercised the same charity to weak consciences that she does to slender purses; for she allows a christian liberty to " poor beneficed men and curates, not being able to provide themselves long gowns, that they may go in short ones."

IX. A ninth spring of this uncharitable practice is, *fixing upon some necessary and special point in christianity, and setting it up in opposition to the rest, or at best in opposition to some one of the rest.* " I have long observed, says an ingenious writer, that christians of different parties have been eagerly laying hold of particular parts of the system of divine truths, and have been contending about them as if each had been all; or as if the separation of the members from each other, and from the head, were the preservation of the body, instead of its destruction. They have been zealous to espouse the defence, and to maintain the honour and usefulness of each apart; whereas their honour as well as usefulness, seems to me to lie much in their connection: And suspicions have often arisen betwixt the respective defenders of each, which have appeared as unreasonable and absurd, as if all the preparations for securing one part of a ship in a storm were to be censured as a contrivance to sink the rest." Thus far Doctor Doddridge in a late preface.

And I think we may as well borrow the similitude expressly from the scripture itself; 1 Cor. xii. 14—21. *The body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?* And how ridiculous would it be if we should suppose *the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? And if they were all one member, where were the body? The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* verse 27. *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

In the same manner, repentance, faith, and love, are three necessary graces or virtues that go to make up a christian; and I might cite several texts of scripture, where each of these three are made necessary to christianity. Is it not therefore a most unreasonable thing to set up either repentance, faith, or love so high, as though the whole of christianity was contained in it, when it is evident that nothing else can make a christian but such a faith as brings with it repentance and good works, or holiness of life, or such a love as produces obedience and good works, which must be the effect of this faith? In christianity nothing avails but such a *faith* as *works by love*, unto all holiness; *Gal.* v. 6. *Repent and believe the gospel*, was the first preaching of Christ and his apostles; *Mark.* i. 15. And in other places, faith is indispensably coupled with repentance; *Acts* iii. 19. xx. 21. Without repentance our sins will not be forgiven us, without faith in Jesus Christ we have no interest in his salvation. True faith must be such as *purifies the heart;* Acts xv. 9. And produces good works as the necessary evidences to prove our faith true; *James* ii. 17, 18. What a strange sort of monstrous christian would this be, who pretended to much faith, but had no love nor repentance? And as monstrous would that pretender be, who had love or repentance without faith. As *God hath set the members in the body, every one of them as it hath pleased him;* 1 Cor. xii. 18.

so has he appointed faith, repentance, and love to fulfil their several offices in the christian life. What a piece of madness therefore is it, and high inconsistency to separate those things which God hath joined in his gospel? Or to preach or paraphrase very long, and talk very much upon ever a one of these, so as to hinder that due respect that is to be paid to the other two? There is no man is or can be a true believer in Christ, if he has not repentance and love, producing good works, as well as that faith which is necessary to make a christian. Let us take heed therefore, lest we give occasion by any of our discourses to exalt one of those virtues or graces to the prejudice of the rest, for the utter loss of either of them will destroy all our pretences to christianity.

When *Solfido* has formed one of his christians exactly agreeable to the shape and humour of his own imagination, and dressed him up in all the feathers of strict orthodoxy that he can find in the severest writers, and by a motto written upon his forehead has called him the man of faith, I am at a loss to know what christian church would receive him into their communion, when he neither professes repentance, nor holiness, nor true love to God or man. It has indeed some of the appearances of a christian statue, but it is a man without feet or hands for walking or moving, a man without life or activity to run the christian race, or to do any thing for God in the world. What glory can our Lord Jesus Christ receive from such a useless figure? What honour can such an imperfect image possibly bring to the gospel: Or what service can he be of in the world, or in the church?

X. The most common cause of uncharitableness, and the last I shall mention, is, that a *great part of the professors of our holy religion, make their heads the chief seat of it, and scarce ever suffer it to descend and warm their hearts.* Jesus the Saviour has been discovered to them in a good degree of outward light, but has never been revealed in them with power, nor their souls changed by divine grace into the image of the gospel. While they boast of their orthodox faith they forget their christian love.

Stellino has stuck his brain all over with notions, and fancies his higher sphere sufficiently illuminated for the conduct of mankind that is round about him, and beneath him: But this set of notions is like a winter-night overhung with stars, bright and shining, but very cold. Natural affections have no room in his soul, it is too much spiritualized with opinions and doctrines. His divinity lies all in his understanding, and the common duties of humanity scarce ever employ his tongue or his hands.

If a man does but profess every tittle of his creed, and believe just as *Stellino* believes, he is declared fit for holy communion; and if he will but dispute warmly for the hard words that distinguish his scheme, and can pronounce Shibboleth well, he shall not be adjudged to death or damnation, but joined heartily to the fellowship of the saints, though his flaming immoralities proclaim him a son of Satan: Satan himself has perhaps a more accurate and nice skill of the controversies of divinity, than the best of our professors and doctors have arrived at; but his pride and malice are *chains of darkness*, and make a devil of him in spite of all his knowledge: Yet *Stellino* affects too near a resemblance to Lucifer, that fallen *son of the morning*.

Vices that are odious to human nature, and wild licentiousnesses of a bitter tongue which destroy all civil society, are very little faults in his opinion, when put into the balance with orthodoxy and zeal. If my conversation among men be blameless and honourable; if my practice consist of virtue and piety; if I profess a solemn faith in

Christ *the* eternal *word, the only begotten Son of God,* who came into the flesh, who died to make a true atonement for the sins of men, and testify my unfeigned subjection to him, and declare the grounds of my hope; yet I must not be admitted to the special part of worship where *Stellino* presides, because I am not arrived at his degree of light, and differ from his expressions a little, when I explain the words justification and the covenant of grace. His lips are ever full of declamation and controversy, and he harangues copiously upon the most affecting points of our religion; he talks much of the amazing condescensions of divine mercy, and of *the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man;* but it has not yet taught him love to his fellow-creatures, nor kindness towards his brethren.

Such another christian is *Misander;* he reserves the duties of christianity which St. Paul describes, he speaks evil of all men but his own party, he is a *brawler* and ungentle, *shewing meekness unto* none; and while he pretends *that the grace of God which brings salvation has appeared unto* him, he lives still *in malice and envy,* and wears the visible characters of the men of heathenism, *hateful and hating one another;* Tit. ii. 11, 12. *chapter* iii. 2—4. He flourishes and enlarges upon the gracious qualities of our Redeemer, our *great High-Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities;* Heb. iv. 15. yet himself has not learned from so glorious an example to *have compassion on them that are ignorant and out of the way;* chapter v. 2. but rather being exalted in his own knowledge, he condemns *his weak brother* to *perish, for whom Christ died;* 1 Cor. viii. 11. Take thy Bible, O vain man, and read a few lines in the eighth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, verses 1, 2, 3. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth; and if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man love God, the same is known of him.* And St. John will assure thee, *that he that loveth not his brother, knoweth not God,* and *if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar;* 1 John iv. 8, 20.

Yet let not any think that I advance charity so high, as to place it in the room of knowledge and faith, or to make it a self-sufficient ground for our admittance into heaven at last: Nor can I suppose it alone to be a sufficient plea for a reception into any visible church of Christ on earth. A confession of the name of Jesus, with the most important and most necessary articles of his blessed religion, a declaration of my personal faith or trust in him, together with a solemn dedication of myself unto the Lord, may be justly required of me by that christian society into which I desire admittance. In default of these the biggest instances of charity will never constitute me a christian: *Except ye believe that I am he,* saith our Saviour, *ye shall die in your sins:* John viii. 24. *If a man strive* for a prize, *yet is he not crowned, unless he strive lawfully;* that is, according to the methods prescribed in the gospel, the knowledge and the faith of the Son of God; 2 *Tim.* ii. 5. and the sentence of our Lord is dreadful and peremptory. *He that believeth not shall be damned;* Mark xvi. 16. *With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;* Rom. x. 10. But without charity my faith can never be true, for it must be such *a faith as worketh by love,* and discovers itself by all *the fruits of the Spirit, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance;* Gal. v. 6, 22.

Thus far have we traced the vice of uncharitableness in many of the properties that belong to it, and the causes of it, and many instances in which it discovers itself in the world, and in the church; and it appears a very shameful vice, and opposite to the religion of the blessed Jesus.

SECTION II.

AN OCCASIONAL VINDICATION OF THE APOSTLES FROM THE CHARGE OF UNCHARITABLENESS.

But what shall we say to those who take the venerable names of the sacred writers, and charge them with the same scandalous practice? There is one *Momus*, who is well known in the world for a person that is ready to find fault with the best of men, and the best of things, if he can suspect any thing which he imagines worthy of blame in them. This man rather than not vindicate himself from the charge of uncharitableness, he will bring even the apostles themselves into the accusation, particularly St. Paul and St. John. Paul, says he, must be a very uncharitable man, for *Heb.* x. 25, 26. He tells us, that *if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.* Thus it is plain, he will not suffer a man to be guilty of any wilful sin, after his profession of christianity, but he damns him for it without hope.

Answer. But I would have *Momus* consider that these are the very words of scripture and inspiration, and not merely St. Paul's opinion. Nor is the sense true which he puts upon these words: It is by no means every wilful sin after we have received and professed christianity, that will bring us under such an irreversible condemnation; but this wilful sin, as it stands in the context, plainly refers to our entire quitting the profession of our christian faith, *verse* 23, and forsaking all christian assemblies, without repentance or returning to them, as *verse* 25. And it is no wonder if a man who roundly renounces christianity wilfully, and without persecution, or any compulsion, should be laid under this dreadful sentence.

Let it be also particularly remarked, that as these verses come in just after the apostle had been speaking of the atoning sacrifice for sin, which Christ himself offered, as a fulfilling of all typical sacrifices and atonements of the Jewish law, *chapter* ix. 10. he expresses this condemning sentence in this language, *there is no more sacrifice for sin*, chapter x. 26, 27. that is, if a man renounces the sacrifice of atonement which Christ has made for sin, *there remains no more sacrifice* for him to trust in, or to hope for, *but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* Thus it appears, that this wilful sinner is condemned for renouncing the only method of atonement provided for the pardon of sins, which it was one of the chief glories of the christian religion to reveal and establish.

St. Paul also is charged with high uncharitableness by this *Momus* for what he says; *Gal.* i. 8, 9. *If any man preach any other gospel to you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*, and yet he owns, *verse* 7. that it is not another gospel, but merely a perversion of the gospel of Christ; and is this enough to be accursed for?

Answer. Let *Momus* consider how grossly the gospel must be perverted, when it is turned into such a sense as the Galatians seem to have been taught by these troublers of their church, *verse* 7. it is such an error as would have carried them again into judaism, with all its yokes of bondage, would have obliged them *to be circumcised* and to observe the jewish festival days, *months and years;* Gal. iv. 10. chapter v. 2. Such an error as shews them to have run back to the ceremonies of the jewish law of justification and

acceptance with God, *verse* 4. Such an error as gave occasion to the apostle to charge them, if ye pursue it *ye are fallen from grace*, that is, from the gospel of grace: And that *Christ would profit them nothing*, would *become of no effect to them*, verses 2, 4.

And after all it must be said these are the words of scripture, and of the Spirit of God, and not merely of St. Paul himself as a private writer; and will the man deal thus with scripture? You see to what lengths this temper will carry a man. But still he pursues his accusation against the apostles, and makes St. John to be grossly guilty of want of charity in his second epistle, verses 10, 11. *If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine*, that is, the doctrine of Christ mentioned in the foregoing verse, *receive him not into your house nor bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*

Now to answer the unreasonable censure of this *Momus*, let us enquire what this doctrine of Christ is; and where should we find the most important parts of it but in the same writer? chapter i. verse 7. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;* chapter ii. verse 2. *Jesus Christ, the righteous*, is not only our *advocate with the Father*, but he is also *the propitiation for our sins.* Chapter iv. verse 10. *God loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*, and that every true christian *is born of God*, chapter v. 1. 4. that is, as other verses of this holy writer in his gospel explain it, *he is born of the Spirit* of God; *John* i. 13. and iii. 5, 6. It appears then that the errors of such whom the apostle would here exclude from our friendship, are such as do not acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Messiah, or not to be a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men, nor allow that every true christian is regenerated and *born of God*, or of his Spirit, that is, by the powerful renewing and sanctifying influences thereof, as other scriptures explain it, particularly *John* i. 12, 13. *John* iii. 3. 5. and as St. Paul expresses it; Eph. i. 19, 20. By such *a mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.*

Again, I would ask *Momus*, why are the names of Christ and the Holy Spirit appointed so generally to be used in baptism, which is the ordinance which initiates us into christianity? Is it not to put us in mind that when we profess christianity we profess the chief articles that relate to him as our Saviour *viz.* Jesus Christ to be *the propitiation for our sins*, we profess to be *born of the Spirit*, or regenerated and renewed to holiness by the Spirit of God? Now if a man asserts himself to be a christian, when he believes and professes neither of these doctrines, then St. John may be to blame indeed in denying the benefit of common christian friendship to such a man. But whither would this *Momus* lead us? What, would he make a christian out of such adversaries to the name and gospel of Christ as neither trust in him as *a propitiation for their sins*, nor hope to be renewed and made holy by the Holy Spirit of God? Let us learn of the heathen poet:

" Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines."

There must be some measures and bounds set to every general virtue, and even to christian charity itself. This does not extend to infidels in the same sense. Surely, there must be due limits set to every thing of this kind: They can scarce be justly called christians, and treated as such, let their profession be what it will, who renounce Jesus Christ in his chief design of coming into the world, as a propitiation for sin, and who renounce the Spirit of God as the effectual spring of our regeneration and holiness. If all deists and infidels may be received into the christian church, into our good esteem and

friendship, those may also be our fellow-christians who deny the most important principles of christianity: But let us take heed that we *do not give that which is holy to such* who have no claim to it; *Matt.* vii. 6. and give charity and christian friendship to those, who seem, according to the word of God, to have no pretence to it.

It has been objected indeed against this second as well as against the third epistle of St. John, that they have not sufficient proof of their divine original: Now it would be too large in this place to enter into a discussion of that question: But there is nothing said in this epistle that is disagreeable to the sense of other holy writers in other parts of scripture; and by our protestant writers these epistles have been generally represented as part of the word of God in the New Testament: Nor can I find sufficient reason to reject it, merely because some persons, that need a more abundant measure of indulgence and of charity than the scripture seems to allow, will not allow it this post of honour, and that is because it excludes them from our good esteem, from christian communion and friendship. Yet after all this censure of *Momus* and his followers, if any such there be, I would still hope and persuade myself, there are some serious and pious souls who have been honestly seeking after the truths of religion, and searching the word of God to find them, who may have indulged some incautious and unhappy hour, wherein they have suffered themselves to be led away into this great *snare and temptation of the evil one;* so that they have begun to doubt of this blessed doctrine of the atoning sacrifice for sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, though it is so strongly, so expressly, and so often asserted by several of the apostles in their writings.

It is my sincere and earnest desire, that God would speedily break these unhappy snares, whatsoever they are, by which their thoughts have been captivated into so dangerous a mistake; 2 *Tim.* ii. 25, 26. that he would please *to open the eyes of their mind* by his enlightening grace, that they may not run on so far in this way as to be exposed to the loss of the benefit of this only *propitiation for sin,* and lay themselves open to that severe sentence of the word of God, that *there remains no further* propitiatory *sacrifice for them, but a certain fearful* expectation;—*Heb.* x. 26, 27. Forgive me, blessed Jesus, if any of the softer influences of animal nature have warped me aside, while I am treating of this glorious virtue of charity, to indulge these milder sentiments, and depart in any measure from the stricter sense and sentence of thy holy word.

SECTION III.

THE MISCHIEVOUS EFFECTS OF UNCHARITABLENESS.

Now if we have not dwelt too long on this subject, *viz.* in tracing out this mischief through its several springs and properties, and if my reader be not quite out of breath, I would ask him to take another turn with me and walk down to a short survey of the same vice in its mischievous effects; that we may be more warmly animated to pursue this iniquity to the death: If it were possible, we would leave it neither root nor branch, name or memory in the christian world.

I. The first and most obvious mischiefs I meet with among christians of an uncharitable humour, are the constant disquiet of their own spirits, the vexation they give their

neighbours, the injury they do to their own edification, and to the edification of all that converse with them.

Singulario has a set of notions and rules whereby he adjusts his own creed and his practice; and whatsoever he hears in religious conference, or in public duty, that does not precisely square to his model, disquiets his ears, disrelishes with his taste, disturbs his conscience, and thus prevents all the benefit that his soul should receive from the discourse or worship.

I grant it very lawful for a man to be disgusted with a sermon, where the greatest part is spent in notions contrary to his judgment, and dressed up in language very foreign to his usual way of converse about divine things; this is shocking to the spirit of the best christians, and the conscience is so nauseated with the largest part of the entertainment that his soul cannot be nourished, and it is proper for him to forbear attendance upon such a preacher, and choose one more suited to the temper of his own spirit. But *Singulario* hath an aversion to a whole hour's discourse, because there were three sentences of a strain different from his opinion. He reaps no blessing from a sermon of excellent composure, of divine materials, of an evangelic frame and just method, because there is one expression in it that is the characteristic of another sect. He sits uneasy under a noble discourse of justification or of faith, because, it may be, the minister doth avoid the terms imputed, meritorious, condition, and instrument; and mentions none of the tortured words of noise and party.

I will not indeed commend a preacher that is always affecting to disguise his own opinions, and for ever hiding himself in ambiguous language, and that in points of moment, thereby to maintain the everlasting applause of all sides. But I must chide *Singulario* for the wry faces he makes at church when he hears but a word or two of contrary sound, or when his ears miss and long for a set of darling phrases.

Three years ago I was in company with *Acharissa*, a sour old christian of a very narrow spirit, and gave her a gentle admonition for the frequent reproaches she cast on the ministers of Christ, that did not preach exactly according to her humour; I blamed that petulant liberty which she took with all her neighbours and acquaintance, to censure them severely for every lesser difference of practice or worship: I recommended to her reading that valuable sermon of the reverend Doctor Tillotson, "Against Evil-speaking;" but I could not persuade her to peruse those few pages, not only because of that strong propensity she had to speak evil of others, but because it was the work of an archbishop; "which sort of office, said she, is a mere human invention, and the scripture knows it not." I know another name which has the same narrow spirit. *Sequilla* hath ever given up the conduct of her soul to the curate of the parish, and after many years attendance on his ministry, in great security of conscience, is well assured that she shall go to heaven at last. Perhaps by some terrible providence, or by some plain word of scripture, she is awakened to a deep and frightful sense of sin, and danger of eternal death. She is visited by the curate, and though he saith some good things to her, yet she finds not the way of peace. A kind neighbour recommends to her some book of consolation written by a dissenter, but she refuses the book and the comfort at once, lest she should be guilty of that damnable sin of separation from the church. How can I ever, said she, expect the peace of God from the pen of a schismatic? And thus endures the racks of conscience rather than she will indulge charity enough to hear or to read what a nonconformist hath written.

Presbycolo, a christian of the same stamp, heard a sermon lately and commended it above measure, confessed how much light and love was kindled in his heart by it, and bestowed unusual strains of respect upon the minister: "But *Presbycolo*," said I, "this man never had the hands of a bishop, or preaching elder, laid upon his head to ordain him." At once I saw his colour change, his spirits sink, and he concluded that all the divine affections in his soul under that sermon must needs be counterfeit, "because now I know," said he, "the preacher is no minister of Christ." O the wretched influence of this vice of uncharitableness upon feeble and deluded souls! It proceeds so far at last as to make persons scrupulous of attending upon any ordinance, lest the administrator should not be a man exactly of their stamp. Thus their hearts are vexed with everlasting disquiet, for they can hardly hear a prayer, or an exhortation, but they find some offence in it; like a man with a thorn in his hand, whatsoever he takes hold of gives him pain, but the cause lies in his own flesh.

There are other instances of this kind to be met with in the world. *Nitidelli* wears his hair three inches below his shoulders, and it is ever well beautified with powder; he frequently eats of a dish of food where blood is one of the ingredients, and he often takes half a pint of red wine to his own share: He maintains serious religion at home and abroad: But *Censorina* cannot join with him in the special ordinances of worship. *It is a shame* for him, she cries, *to wear long hair, he is a wine-bibber*, and he *abstains* not *from blood;* nor can I be reconciled to him upon any terms, unless he retrench these horrible excesses. But he still goes on careless and regardless of the peace of his fellow-christian, and scorns her little clamours, rather than endeavours, by gentleness and compliance, to satisfy or remove them.

Now walkest thou not charitably, O *Nitidelli*, for thou grievest thy sister with thy meat and garments, *for whom Christ died;* Rom. xiv. 15. But I would fain have *Censorina* learn also, *that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Both of you therefore ought to *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;* verses 17, 19.

Nor is this mischief confined to single persons: It makes a further progress still, and infects the neighbour and acquaintance. Every Monday in the evening *Crites* sits at the head of a club that meet together to arraign and sentence the sermons of the foregoing day: "Did you mark, my friends, such an expression under the fourth head? It sounded harsh in my ears. Surely the man is not orthodox; pray acquaint your families of the danger of his opinions, and forbid their attendance." "Truly," replies *Momion*, "he insisted so much on the grace of God, that he left but one quarter of his hour-glass for the duties of the gospel; I fear he is a supralapsarian, my spirit rises against him, and I must warn my acquaintance of his doctrine." A third person in the company begins to surmise that his morals are not good: "I have heard an ill story of a preacher not long since," saith he, "and surely this must be the man:" And then he proceeds in a direct opposition to the grace of charity, as it is described by St. Paul; 1 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Tit.* iii. 2. I easily *believe* all that is evil of him; I am *provoked* at him; *I hope* no good from him; I cannot *bear* his principles; I cannot endure his person; and I should rejoice in the seasonable death of such an antinomian as this is. Thus does *the root of bitterness spring up* into wide branches, it bears poisonous fruit, and many souls are troubled. Blessed be God who of late years begins to *purge out* this sour *leaven* from amongst us.

II. The next pernicious effect I take notice of is, that an uncharitable carriage brings

a disgrace and blemish upon christianity, beyond the guilt and scandal of heathenism: It is the character of the gentiles indeed, that they were *hateful and hating one another*, but not for different principles of philosophy, which they professed, nor different methods of worship, which they paid to their gods. There were no civil wars proclaimed, nor courts of inquisition erected amongst them upon this account, though their controversies about divine things were not trivial, and they differed widely in the very foundations of religion; and, as an ingenious author expresses himself on this subject, "Though poets have made the gods enter into factions and quarrels for commonwealths, yet commonwealths never did the same for their gods." But if the heathens had been never so much enraged, and quarrelled never so fiercely for the sake of opinions and formalities, still they were almost infinitely more excusable than christians can pretend to be: For the very doctrines of most of their sects permit revenge; and they have many a bloody principle amongst them. But christianity is the most mild, the most gentle, and the most peaceable religion: Never a doctrine was taught amongst mankind that hath so much of love and sweetness in it: Never a system or rule of duties, wherein meekness and candour, charity and compassion, are so prescribed and enforced.

Never was there a religion instituted by God, or invented by men, with so much goodness in the heart and soul of it, or so many charms and amiablenesses in the face. It is built upon the foundation of God's eternal and unchangeable love. It was love that assumed human nature, and became the great prophet and teacher of it, and the spirit of love in our hearts is its vital spring within us: It is divine love dwelling in flesh, hanging upon a cross, bleeding and dying for enemies and rebels that hath purchased all the promised blessings of our religion; and it is the same love arising from the grave, and reigning in glory, that distributes these blessings to men: And in all the melting language of compassion and tenderness, invites us to receive them: It was this love dwelling personally amongst men, calls himself our brother, and charges us to love all the professors of the same faith as brethren: He requires that we should be ready to *lay down our lives for one another*, as he did for us all: And orders it be the distinguishing character of all his followers, *Hereby shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;* John xiii. 34, 35.

God himself is infinite and unseen love; Christ is love incarnate and visible; and a christian is or should be an effigy of that love graven to the life, by the finger of the divine Spirit. Now, for the professors of such a doctrine to quarrel about trifles, and grow malicious upon every punctilio of different sentiments, how grossly do they abuse the christian name? They rob their own religion of its due honour amongst men, and bring infinite shame and discredit upon christianity in the face of infidel nations. It is for the sake of this madness which is found amongst the pretended followers of our blessed Lord, *his name is blasphemed among the heathens;* and the conversion of the kingdoms of this world to the faith of Christ, rendered almost rationally impossible.

III. *Thirdly*, This uncharitable temper rages even to wars and blood; hath laid the churches of Christ desolate, and dispeopled many countries in christendom. It doth not spend itself in secret like a sullen humour, or a vapour of melancholy, but breaks out into public violence and disorder, and all that is near it feels the indignation. It sits brooding over *the eggs of a cockatrice*, and daily sends forth *a fiery flying serpent, instruments of cruelty are in its habitation*, and all its children are sons of blood and rapine. *O my soul, come thou not into their council; unto their assembly my honour be not thou*

united; for in their anger they have slain millions of men, and in their self-will they have digged up the foundations of a thousand churches. *Cursed be their anger for it is fierce, and their wrath for it is cruel;* Gen. xlix. 6, 7. These men of division at the last judgment-day, may justly expect to be *divided from Jacob, and to be scattered far away from the Israel of God. For God will render to every one according to their works;* Rom. ii. 16. And surely these bloody persecutions are such works as demand like revenges from a God of justice; if such as practise them die without repentance.

If you ask me the method whereby this uncharitable temper has advanced to such a degree of rage and barbarity, it is very obvious and easy to be explained. At first these men assume to themselves the name of the church, and lodge in themselves a sort of infallibility, or at least pretend to a divine authority to determine finally all doubtful cases of religion, and to rule over the consciences of men. They set up the wretched trade of creed-making, and demand the belief of mankind: Then they give out decrees, such as Christ and his apostles never gave, and pronounce damnation against all that doubt or disbelieve them; though their *fables* are *not cunningly devised*, because they are made too big for belief. Some of them contradict the most substantial principles of sense, reason, and christianity.

You will see this plainly exemplified in a few instances I shall give of their decrees and canons. As "Whosoever shall affirm that there are more or less than seven sacraments, let him be anathematized, excommunicated, or accursed: Whosoever shall affirm that the substance of bread and wine remains in the eucharist, together with the body and blood of Christ, or shall deny the wonderful change of the whole substance of bread into body, and wine into blood, which the catholic church calls transubstantiation, let him be excommunicated: Whosoever shall say, that extreme unction doth not confer grace, nor remit sin, nor ease the sick, let him be excommunicated."* Thus oftentimes the same anathema and eternal death is denounced against such as disobey their decrees about matters of trifling importance; matters which they themselves can never pretend to be, in their own nature, necessary to salvation. "He that shall say a common minister can confirm as well as a bishop, let him be excommunicated: He that shall say, the ceremonies, the vestments, &c. in the celebration of the mass, are incentives to sin, rather than duties of piety, let him be excommunicated: He that shall say, a priest may become a layman again, let him be excommunicated: And whosoever shall say, that the hierarchy of bishops, presbyters, and ministers or deacons, is not of divine ordination, let him be excommunicated." When this church has thus excommunicated and cursed christians better than herself, and cast them out of her arms, she gives them up to the secular power,† with an awful and deceitful charge, that the obstinate heretic shall not be hurt in life or limb, but with a full design that they should be tortured and destroyed. Having solemnly *delivered them to the devil* in their spiritual courts, the temporal executioner sends them out of the world, not *that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord*, but that they may be plunged immediately *into utter darkness*, where Satan dwells.

It is the command of Christ to the Roman church, by Paul the great apostle, *Rom.* xiv. 1. That such as were *weak in the faith should be received to their fellowship, and not*

* Canons of the church of Rome in the council of Trent.

† See the History of the Inquisition.

troubled with doubtful disputations, such as the observance of *meats and days,* and things of like moment: But the Romans have now so far rebelled against this rule, as to admit persons into their communion upon no other terms than a blind submission to all the doubtful disputables which that church imposes. They had an order from St. Paul, Rom. xv. 7. *to receive all such as Christ had received;* and consequently to reject no others but those whom Christ rejects; but they forgot this charitable canon of our Lord, while they receive thousands to their communion which have no visible marks of the image of Christ, and reject thousands, and curse them to hell, whom the Lord Christ will acknowledge for his, and pronounce them blessed of his Father at the last day.

When they first begin to assume this sovereignty over faith and conscience, they use a shew of argument, and pretend to instruct and enlighten the weak and the ignorant. They admonish them to hearken to the church; but if the ignorant are still weak in belief, and cannot be convinced of the lawfulness of their ceremonies, then they send the sheriff and the jailor to carry on the dispute; a prison and the gibbet are the next arguments; and when reason and scripture will not assist them, they employ fire and sword, to *contend earnestly* for the fables that were never *delivered to the saints;* Jude, verse 3.

To draw up an account of the horrible effects of uncharitableness would be to transcribe the ecclesiastical history of many ages: Whole churches and quarters of the world, the eastern and western, have damned one another plentifully upon the account of imposed days, and trifles which the gospel leaves indifferent, or rather forbids. How many of the canons of ancient councils have been influenced in their formation by this assuming spirit, and as terribly enforced in their execution to the reproach and devastation of christendom?

But it moves my grief and wonder, that a modern church that pretends not to infallibility should assume a strange dominion over our faith and practice. It asserts its own "power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith; when in the very preceding words it confesses, that the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the church of Rome has erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith." It demands my admiration, that such a church should canonically denounce her excommunications in abundance, against those that dissent from her in some disputable things, while they retain all her professed doctrines of the christian faith.

And it is a pain and a shame to our eyes to look backward upon other times, and to behold pamphlets written against toleration by such as are ministers of the gospel of peace, that perfect law of liberty. It was their opinion then, and they told the world so in print, that sectaries ought to be silenced by the civil power; Now sectary is a name of broad dimensions, and has a terrible stretch with it: The long scourge would in time reach all those who differ from the hand that manages that weapon of chastisement: None must be authorized to preach in any form, but by the solemnity of imposing hands, by a company of authorized men. Because some subjected themselves to the determination of a synod, they would make it the duty of all their neighbours to wear the same yoke; and thought others were bound to become slaves to the same dictates. But I forbear this charge, and almost wish it cancelled: For as the magistrate did not put in practice the uncharitable pamphlets, so those reverend and honourable writers

have been taught to acknowledge the mistake of their zeal, when their own verbal *rods* were turned against them, and became real *scorpions* with stings and scourges a thousand fold. The fathers have been dearly instructed in the value of toleration and liberty by most abundant retaliations. The children have learned to preach this part of the gospel well, and I am persuaded they will never forget it again.

If we turn over more ancient annals, the Marian days give us horrible examples of fiery zeal in the clergy, and the glorious reign of the succeeding virgin princess is hardly to be purged from the stain of blood. Blessed be God who has put into the heart of our civil governors to restrain the fury of all spiritual administrators. The long and dreadful train of capiases and gaolers, prisons and plunderings, ruin and banishment, silencings and violent suppressions are no longer the attendants of the anathemas of any church among us. And I hope no church mourns the loss of them; though there are some anathemas that abide still as terrors to those *that are weak in faith*, and not very honourable monuments of that church's charity.

In these late years the scene of Great Britain was a little shadow of Spain and France, where dragoons and the inquisition manage ecclesiastical discipline. We were brought to the very gates of "Aceldama." The agents of Rome were ready with their instruments of death. Adored be the divine Spirit that awakened the rulers of the church to behold the common danger, and raised in them generous resolutions and promises to exercise charity and temper towards their brethren. Glory to that God whose kind providence sent us a deliverer, and forbid England to become a field of blood and martyrdom: And new songs of praise are still due unto divine mercy, for establishing the person and heart of our queen in the throne and the principles of so glorious an example and predecessor. Her gentle government subdues the hearts of all her people to herself; her charity joins their affections to one another; her parental care and love reconciles christian parties, and her wisdom unites christian nations.

IV. The last mischief I shall mention, and which should fright us terribly from the peril of it, is, that "an uncharitable man wounds the very vitals of that religion, by which he hopes for eternal life:" And whilst his fury rages against his brother for accidental differences, he shakes the very foundations of his own christianity, and endangers or prevents his own salvation; his boasted orthodoxy in opinion is made vain, while his practical ungodlinesses are so real; and his faith appears to be little better than that of devils, when he mingles so much of their malice with it. In vain does he glory in the brightness of his notions; in vain doth he presume *darkness is past, and the true light now shineth: For he that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, he abideth in darkness, even till now;* 1 John ii. 8, 9.

Such a wisdom composed of mere opinion and wrath can never lead aright up to heaven, for it did not descend from thence: *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not.* Whatever your pretences of truth be, this is but *lying against the truth: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, carnal, devilish:* James iii. 14—18. It is impossible there should be true faith without sincere love: *If I understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge, if I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have all*

faith, so that I could remove mountains, and were destitute of *charity,* my pretensions to religion are the mere sound of *noisy brass,* or *a tinkling cymbal;* 1 Cor. xiii 1. 2. It is such a *charity* that *suffereth long,* that *is not easily provoked,* that *beareth all things,* and *believeth all things,* and taketh all things in the best sense, and *thinketh no evil:* It is such a charity as this that is a substantial part of our religion. Charity in the heart, is absolutely required to make up inward christianity; and the appearance of it in the life is a most necessary part of godliness.

It is true indeed, that all graces and virtues are very imperfect in this present state, and there is much of uncharitableness remaining in many a good man: But that man can never be good that has no charity. *Zelotus* has spent his life in declaiming against some little modes and gestures used in worship by his fellow christians, or in imposing some uninstituted ceremonies on the consciences of his brethren. He hath stirred up the magistrate to persecute some of them to prisons, and almost to death. He flattered his conscience with hopes that his zeal for the church should not only render him acceptable at the last day, but provide him a large reward. He lies now languishing upon bed a of sickness, on the very borders of eternity, and is terribly awakened to behold his own mistake; whilst he stands within sight of the tribunal of Christ, and the face of the Judge, his former practice appears to his conscience in its true and frightful shape; the fire that hath animated him against his brethren, now flashes in his soul, and discovers its infernal source; now he dreads to be made an example of the same vengeance among devils, with which he hath pursued his fellow mortals, he groans out his last breath in bitter agonies; cries to the God of love for mercy upon his departing spirit; and expires almost without hope. He is gone. But we leave his soul to the compassions of a God who can better pardon his mighty errors, than he would forgive others in their little mistakes.

Thus dreadfully hath this vice of uncharitableness prevailed against the honour of christianity, and the peace of mankind. Thus sacrilegiously hath it taken away one of the brightest marks of the best religion, and that is love. It hath defaced the beauty of our holy profession, scandalized the sacred name that we bear, made a slaughter-house of the church of Christ, and deceived the souls of men to their own eternal ruin.

Just as I had finished this essay, *Pharisaino* happened to come into my study, and taking up the first leaf, read the title, and was persuaded this discourse must be written against himself. "No," said I, "there is not any man alive personally intended in these papers; but if you please to peruse them, and shall apply the characters to yourself, I hope you will confess Divine Providence has led you into a conviction of your false zeal." *Pharisaino* sat him down immediately, and with a running eye passed through every page. And though the frequent wrinkle of his brow discovered his inward chagrin and disgust, yet he paid me many a ceremony; and "behold," said he, "how language and fancy will dress up zeal like a monster to fright men out of their fervour of spirit."

"I have heard," added he, "that you have some skill in painting; pray draw me the figure of this uncharitableness in just and proper colours, this monster which you complain has so narrowed and disgraced, and murdered christianity." I will attempt it, *Pharisaino,* if you will furnish me with a sheet of large paper, and that of the fairest kind, to represent the christian church in this world. First, I will pare it round, and reduce it to a very small compass; then with much ink will I stain the whiteness of

it, and deform it with many a blot; at the next sitting I will stab it through rudely with an iron pen; and when I put the last hand to complete the likeness, it shall be smeared over with blood.

APPENDIX TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IF the scandal and cruelty of an uncharitable temper have not been described in characters sufficiently frightful, it must be imputed to a want of skill in the hand that attempted it, for there is no want of formidable features in the vice itself. Perhaps a little and unknown pen hath not force enough to wage successful war against this mighty iniquity; and the printer, in two or three vacant pages, permits me to call in the aid of some great and well-known names: Names who fought against it in their lives, who *being dead, yet speak*, and plead heartily that it may be destroyed. They espoused the cause of charity with a warm zeal, being persuaded that it made a considerable part of our religion, and that the contrary humour was destructive to all that is called christian. Since this infection is not confined to one party of men, but hath spread itself wide through all christian societies among us, I have taken the liberty in the foregoing leaves to strike at it wheresoever I found it; and those who hide this venom in their heart still, to whatsoever tribe they belong, let them hear the words of their dead fathers: Let them blush at their own folly, and no longer refuse to be healed.

Archbishop Tillotson, in his Works in Folio, page 217, acquaints us that "other sects were distinguished by little opinions, or by some external rites and observances in religion; but our Saviour pitches upon that which is the most substantial, the most large and extensive, the most useful and beneficial, the most human, and the most divine quality of which we are capable, and that is love." And page 126. He declares that "uncharitableness is as bad an evidence, either of a true christian or a true church, as a man would wish. Damning of men is a very hard thing, and therefore whenever we do it, the case must be wonderfully plain. And page 364. We should rather be contented to err a little on the favourable and charitable part, than to be mistaken on the censorious and damning side. Our blessed Saviour frames his parables with a remarkable bias to the charitable side, to reprove the uncharitableness of the Jews, who positively excluded all the rest of mankind, besides themselves, from all hopes of salvation. An odious temper, which to the infinite scandal of the christian name and profession, hath prevailed upon some christians to a notorious degree."

Dr. Owen, in his Discourse of the Person of Christ, page 222, saith, "One christian who is meek, humble, kind, patient and useful unto all, that condescends to the ignorance, weaknesses, and infirmities of others, that passes by provocations, injuries, and contempt with patience and with silence, unless where the glory and truth of God call for a just vindication, that pitieth all sorts of men in their failings and miscarriages, who is free from jealousies and evil surmises, that loveth what is good in all men, and all men, even wherein they are not good, nor do good, doth more express the virtues and excellencies of Christ, than thousands can do with the most magnificent works of

piety or charity, that is liberality where this frame is wanting in them. For men to pretend to follow the example of Christ, and in the mean time to be proud, wrathful, envious, bitterly zealous, calling for *fire from heaven* to destroy men, or fetching it themselves from hell, is to cry, 'Hail unto him,' and to crucify him afresh unto their power."

Mr. Baxter, in his Christian Directory, Part I. page 40. writes thus: "Surely if the very life of godliness lay not much in unity and love, we should never have had such words spoken of it as you find in scripture. Love is to the soul as our natural heat is to the body; whatever destroys it, destroys life; and therefore cannot be for our good. Be certain, that opinion, course, or motion, tends to death that tends to abate your love to your brethren, much more, which under pretence of zeal, provoketh you to hate and hurt them. And a little after, to limit all the church to your party, and deny all or any of the rest to be christians and parts of the universal church, is schism by a dangerous breach of charity. And page 41. he asserts it as a most dangerous thing to a young convert to be ensnared in a sect: It will, before you are aware, possess you with a feverish sinful zeal for the opinions and interest of that sect. It will make you bold in bitter invectives and censures against those that differ from them. It will corrupt your church communion, and fill your very prayers with partiality and human passions. It will secretly bring malice under the name of zeal into your minds and words; in a word, it is a secret but deadly enemy to christian love and peace. Let them that are wiser and more orthodox and godly than others, shew it as the Holy Ghost directs them; *James* iii. 13—17.

The Baptists, in their Appendix to their Confession of Faith, 1677, say, "The discharge of our own consciences, in point of baptism, doth not any ways disoblige or alienate our affections or conversation from any others that fear the Lord; but that we may and do, as we have opportunity, participate of the labours of those whom God hath endued with abilities above ourselves, and qualified and called to the ministry of the word; earnestly desiring to approve ourselves to be such as follow after peace with holiness; and therefore we always keep that blessed "Irenicum" or healing word of the apostle before our eyes; *Philip* iii. 15, 16. And at the end of the appendix they declare, that in as much as these things, *viz.* modes of baptism, &c. are not of the essence of christianity, but that we agree in the fundamental doctrines thereof, we do apprehend there is sufficient ground to *lay aside all bitterness* and prejudice, and in the spirit of love and meekness to embrace and own each other therein; leaving each other at liberty to perform such other services, wherein we cannot concur, apart unto God, according to the best of our understanding."

ESSAY VIII.

OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN SCRIPTURE, AND THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF CHRISTIANS IN THINGS LESS NECESSARY.

SECTION I.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THESE DIFFICULTIES.

CONCERNING the doctrines and duties which peculiarly belong to the New Testament, I have generally concluded this to be a good rule of judgment, that according to the degree of their importance or necessity to salvation, such is commonly the degree of their evidence; and the frequency of their repetition is, for the most part, proportionable to their usefulness. Those great truths of our religion, and those practices of christianity, without which we cannot be saved, are described in the word of God, in large and fair characters, so that "he who runs may read them." The visions and revelations of the mind and will of God our sovereign, are written and made plain upon the tables of the evangelists, or of the apostles; *Hab.* ii. 2. they are not mentioned once and briefly, but many pages explain and repeat them; they stand in a divine and convincing light, and may easily be understood by those who, with a humble and teachable spirit, enquire what they must believe and do, in order to please God. This remark is much confirmed by that promise which assures us that it should be so in gospel-times. The high way to heaven is so plain, that *the way-faring men*, or strangers, *though they be fools* in understanding, *shall not err therein;* Isaiah xxxv. 8. A man that labours in his daily calling, in the city or the field, or a servant in the lowest rank of life, may, with due application in their vacant moments, be acquainted with the necessary truths and duties of our religion; besides that the Spirit of God is promised to sincere and diligent seekers, to faithful and humble enquirers, and shall be bestowed sufficiently to inform them of the sure way to eternal life; Prov. ii. 1. 6. *If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* Luke xi. 13. *Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* And the Spirit is sent to *guide* the faithful *into all truth;* John xvi. 13.

The wisdom, the equity and the goodness of God seem all to concur in fixing matters of necessary belief and practice in this situation, that is, that they should be often and plainly expressed. If there be any particular doctrine or duty which I find written but in one single text of scripture, or expressed but darkly, I should reasonably conclude the great God never designed that doctrine, or that duty to be of very great importance in the christian life: For a dark expression is much more easily mistaken, as to the true

sense of it; and a single text is more liable to be miscopied, or dropped by a transcriber, or be misconstrued by a translator, or overseen and neglected by a common reader or hearer; and the great God would not put matters of high importance on so doubtful and dangerous a foot, and leave things necessary at such uncertainties, lest honest and humble enquirers should, after all their pains, mistake their way to heaven.

A sudden thought of the form and order of baptism, prescribed to us, *Matt.* xxviii. 18. made me at first suspect, that there must be one exception made to this rule, about the frequent repetition of any doctrine or duty necessary to salvation; but upon a further consideration and review of things, it appears evident to me now, that though this appointment of the form of baptism was prescribed to be done in the name of the Holy Spirit, as well as of the Father and the Son, yet it was by no means necessary to the salvation of any man, and therefore there was no necessity of having it often repeated. Let us consider,

I. That the appointment of it is but once expressed, and that by one holy writer, and there is never an actual example or instance of this complete form of baptism practised in any place of scripture. Observe that remarkable text, *Acts* xix. 2. where St. Paul enquired of the young converts that were baptized at Ephesus, *Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* He then enquired, *unto what were ye baptized? and they said unto John's baptism;* and Paul had told them that John taught them, *that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus: When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* Whether they were baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit, or no, is not actually expressed; which is something strange when that was the chief point of enquiry concerning their baptism into the Holy Ghost, Here also it may be observed, that those who were here baptized, *Acts* xix. 5, 6. immediately received the Holy Ghost; whence it may be very probably inferred, that some person were baptized with the Holy Ghost itself, who were not actually baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost. Consider,

II. When the business of baptism is mentioned in several places in the epistles, it is generally declared that baptism was performed in the name of the Lord Jesus; Rom. vi. 3. *so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death;* Gal. iii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ;* 1 Cor. xii. 13. *By one Spirit we are baptized into one body,* that is, Christ, as in the foregoing verse; but I can find no mention of the disciples being baptized into the Holy Ghost.

III. Though I am ready to believe, from many expressions in the primitive history of the church, that the baptizers did usually keep to this form of words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" yet it is evident from a long account which Grotius gives us upon this text, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. that they used divers forms, that is, they sometimes expressed the Father by a periphrasis, "The God of all, or the God of the whole, the God and Father of the whole, sometimes the Son was expressed by the Word, or the only begotten Son of God: Sometimes the Holy Ghost was expressed by the Spirit who inspired the prophets.

I might add, that upon their profession of the christian religion, sometimes it is called the profession of the remission of sins, or the catholic church, or everlasting life, but they never made a scruple of their being rightly baptized into salvation upon any of these accounts; and I am persuaded, that had the apostles themselves, or the primitive

christians, thought it necessary to salvation, the form of baptism would have been more express in the history of it, and been more particularly repeated. I think, therefore the rule may stand good still, that where a doctrine or a duty is mentioned but in one single place of the scripture, it cannot be of absolute necessity to salvation. I hope the reader will forgive this long digression, and then proceed.

On the other hand, where particular truths or duties are often repeated in scripture, and very plainly expressed in several places, it is hardly possible that they should be subject to these inconveniences. It is not to be supposed that the transcribers of the New Testament should make the same mistake in every place, where these propositions are mentioned; that they should drop them out of every chapter; that the translator should misconstrue them in every text; or that their misconstruction should always seem to make good sense in every context where they stand; or finally, that the hearer or reader should always overlook them when they are found in so many passages, and so often occur to his ear or eye: But it is very apparent, and all men must acknowledge that matters of less moment, and things not necessary, are not mentioned so often: And when they are mentioned, the scripture sometimes gives no determination or positive injunctions about them; nor do the apostles determine the smaller controversies with that plain, exact, and positive method of speech, which you find them use in the most substantial truths and duties. If we read the xiv. chapter to the Romans, it must convince us of this assertion. St. Paul does not there decide the little controversies about observations of meats and days, but seems to leave them to charity. Nor are the lesser points of christianity half so often mentioned, or urged with half so much vehemence, as the grand duties of faith and love, repentance and holiness. In matters of lower concernment among the formalities and modes of religion, or even in some higher articles, whose circumstances and logical relations are not necessary to salvation, the scripture has its δυσνοητα et fere αλυτα, as divines call them, that is, almost insolvable difficulties, and things very hard to be understood by men in this state, at least by common readers.

Sometimes the matter is so sublime, so unlike all mortal affairs, and so divinely superior to every thing here below, that perhaps it was not possible to describe it fully and plainly in human words: And the more enlightened the writer or speaker was, the deeper and more inexpressible might the truths be which he reveals. Our Saviour has made some such discoveries at the latter end of his prayer in the xvii. of St. John's gospel. Such are the doctrines of the union or oneness of Christ with God his Father, and the oneness or union of the saints with God and Christ. Some things are constrained to be expressed in a human way less suitable to their own dignity, and yet even then they are not perfectly easy to be understood, for earthly metaphors will not convey to our thoughts a full idea of things divine and heavenly. When Christ had been teaching Nicodemus the doctrine of regeneration, *John* iii. 12. he adds, *If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?* The apostle Paul, the most enlightened of all mere men, saw and heard some things among his visions and revelations, that were unutterable: 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. And some things which he has published for the use of the church, *according to the wisdom given to him, are hard to be understood,* as St. Peter himself assures us; 2 *Peter* iii. 16. Again, I might take notice that in matters which are prophetical, both in the Old Testament

and in the New, there are many dark expressions, many parables and hard figures of speech, which are made use of to express and convey some general and indistinct ideas of future events, which were not fit to be more fully revealed in that day, and which only the accomplishment was designed to explain to future days or ages, *when these things are come to pass, then shall ye know that I have foretold them;* John xiii. 19. and chapters xiv. 29. and xvi. 4.

The Spirit of God, for wise ends, hath expressed some things in particular seasons, whether doctrinal or prophetical, in obscure phrases, capable of a double interpretation. Other things are very briefly hinted, and the holy writer doth but just glance at them in passing, and does not dwell upon them long enough to explain them, that being not his present chief design. Some words are so ambiguous and of various meaning in the same chapter, that it is not easy to determine their precise sense in each verse; and these words also transferred into our language may not have the same different meanings as the original, and perhaps too, may be determined to the wrong sense by the translators; but the vulgar can read only their own language, and their judgments are determined by the translator's opinion. The various meanings put upon the words νόμος the law, ἐκκλησία the church, χειροτονέω to ordain, ἐπίσκοπος a bishop or overseer, &c. sufficiently prove this.

Besides, the sense of many a scripture depends not merely on the literal construction of the words, but on the knowledge of the context, and on the consideration of the scope and design of the writer, and perhaps the deeper design of the Spirit of God that inspired him: It depends on the character of the person that writes, and on the character and condition of the persons to whom he writes, into what errors or evil practices they were fallen, at what times, and under what circumstances these things fell out: All which it is impossible every mechanic should know, and but few scholars are well acquainted with: These difficulties in scripture occasion different opinions among the readers; and because each would impose his sense upon all the rest of christians, a thousand quarrelling folios have sprung.

There is another difficulty and shade of darkness which falls upon many texts of scripture, and particularly in the New Testament, from the extraordinary actions and modes of action in the primitive and inspired times. It is certain that some things recorded in the acts of the apostles, and occasionally spoken of in the epistles, refer only to the extraordinary and inspired transactions of those miraculous times, and cannot be imitated by us: Such are the communication of gifts by the imposition of hands, the healing the sick by anointing with oil, the multitude of useful speakers in one assembly, the talking various languages in public worship if an interpreter were present, &c. It is as certain also, that some things are recorded in some of those scriptures, as patterns and directions for our imitation in all ages. Such are the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the choice of deacons, the ordination of overseers or bishops, the practice of occasional communion, &c. But there are some circumstances relating to these actions, concerning which it is hard to determine how far they belong to the extraordinary affairs of that day, and how far they are rules for our conduct in ordinary cases.

Now from all these differences have arisen many laborious and angry volumes of noise and wrangle about *the mint, the anise, and the cummin,* about the dress and the fringes

of religion, which have vexed the learned world, and disquieted and divided the church of Christ.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties in scripture, and the divided sentiments of men about them, yet there is no room for the popish doctrine of the insufficiency of the holy scriptures; no need of any living judge of controversies, or a seat of infallibility on earth; for the grand doctrines and duties which are necessary to salvation, such as *repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Prophet, a High-Priest and a King*, the necessity of universal *holiness, pardon of sin through the blood of Christ, the resurrection of the dead*, and eternal rewards and punishments in the world to come; all these, I say, are written down in scripture, in as plain and express a manner as the nature and importance of them required; and about these things persons of a sober, humble, and honest mind cannot well mistake, if they are diligent in their enquiry, and *seek wisdom of that God who gives liberally, and upbraids us not* with our own folly; *James* i. 5. Not only are all matters necessary to salvation written plain enough for every reader, but we have also, as I hinted before, the promise of the assistance of the Holy Spirit to teach us to understand all such revelations, that sincere and diligent men may not be suffered to fall into such a mistake as to fail of acceptance with God. Nay further, we have good encouragement to hope, that even in some things on which salvation doth not necessarily depend, but are only designed to promote the further sanctification and comfort, peace and hope of the church, the Spirit of God will often assist the upright and humble seeker, yet still there will remain difficulties enough to exercise inquisitive souls, for I find no certain promise, that God will always satisfy every sincere enquirer in the full meaning of all difficult texts.

"I glorify thee, O my God, that thou hast not confined the knowledge of thyself to the wise and the learned world, but hast written down the way of salvation so plain, that a child may read and attain it. Let the scribes, and doctors, and critics of the age wrangle about *the pins of the tabernacle*, and the *seats in the synagogue*, let them contend, even to blood, about the "ofs," the "ands," and the "moreovers" of the Bible, my soul shall dwell in peace, and rest on these pillars of safety, even the great and evident doctrines of the christian faith. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast revealed* thyself and thy Son *unto babes*, and hast not made it a matter of wit and criticism to be a christian; *Matt.* xi. 25. *The foolish and the base, and the weak things of this world are chosen* to salvation; 1 *Cor.* i. 26. and they understand, and believe, and practise all the necessary articles, while they may differ from each other in some lesser forms of worship and discipline, and are not able to maintain an argument on either side."

What is here asserted concerning the substance of some of the less necessary articles of our religion, *viz.* that they are somewhat obscurely expressed in scripture; the same may be applied also to the circumstantial topics, to the appendices, and the logical relations even of the greatest and most necessary points of christianity, as I hinted before. Though the practice of repentance, and the promises of pardon; though justification by faith, and the death of Christ *as a ransom* for sinners, are so often and so plainly affirmed, yet it is not affirmed so often, nor so plain in scripture, what logical relation faith bears to our justification; whether it is a condition, as some make it; or a receiving instrument, as others suppose: Nor is it so indisputably and so evidently written in the word of God, whether Christ died as a conditional atonement for all sin,

and a purchaser of salvation in general for all that are willing to accept it, or whether as a strict representative only of the elect, and to procure neither absolute nor conditional pardon for any sins but theirs.

It is evident beyond all doubt, that where the gospel comes *he that believes shall be saved;* Mark xvi. 15. But whether faith saves us as it is a mere dependence on divine grace, or on the priesthood of Christ, or whether it saves us rather as a hearty belief of the gospel and the grace of it, even such a belief as comes to be the spring of our repentance and our holiness, this is not so exceeding evident as to leave no room for controversy.

It is abundantly revealed in holy scripture, that without repentance of our sins we can never be saved, nor shall any of our iniquities be forgiven without a sincere conversion to God; but to declare with the utmost exactness and full assurance what logical relation our repentance bears to our pardon, scripture hath not taught us quite so fully, nor so clearly described it.

It is sufficiently plain to every reader of the Bible, that holiness of heart and life is of absolute necessity to our entrance into heaven, for *without holiness no man can see God;* Heb. xii. 14. But how far, and in what precise sense this holiness and obedience to the commands of God can give a *right to enter into the gates of the city,* is something harder to determine; *Rev.* xxii. 14. or what is that sort of right or title which our own sincere obedience gives us to the immediate possession of blessedness, though we are fully assured from several places in the word of God, it is very different from the right which we obtain by the obedience and sufferings of Christ.

In some places the sacred writer seems to mention one doctrine, while he is pursuing some one subject with warmth and zeal; in other places of scripture the contrary seems to be signified or hinted; now both these in the literal sense, and without limitation, cannot be true: And which of these two texts must be reduced to the other, by certain distinctions and limitations in order to a reconciliation, is not so easy always to determine: For in some instances it may happen that the proposition which is but implied in one text, is nearer the truth than another proposition which seems to be expressed in another place; which can only be decided by a due survey of the context, and the different designs of the writer, and a comparison of other scriptures.

Therefore if we will dispute about these solemn subjects, let our warmest zeal and our sharpest weapons be engaged against those adversaries of the gospel, who attempt to ruin the foundations of it: Let us *contend* most *earnestly* for the defence of what God most obviously and incontestibly reveals; but our coolest debates, our candour and charity, rather than fierceness, should be employed about the points of more dubious discovery: At best we should maintain great moderation so long, till we find the lesser errors spreading like a secret gangrene, and drawing along with them dismal consequences, till they are observed to infect the more substantial parts of godliness, and endanger the vitals and very essence of christianity.

If our reverend fathers and brethren have shewn a fiery zeal about these lesser errors, I would persuade myself their chief motive was a suspicion of danger and ruin to the gospel itself, in the liberty, in the purity, and in the glory of it, if they should have connived at these lesser mistakes, or treated them with a cold indifference: And it is possible that sometimes they might have reason for their suspicion and their zeal, though it may be confessed they were but men, and their fervor might sometimes exceed due bounds.

But, in general, as to these meaner points, moderation is our duty: *Whereto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, and if any be otherwise minded, God* in his most proper season *will reveal it also to them;* Phil. iii. 15, 16. It is as if the blessed apostle had said, that those who trust only in Christ and his righteousness, as the ground of their acceptance before God, shall be joyfully received to join their right-hand of fellowship with mine; and if they do but pursue holiness sincerely from the plainer motives of christianity, though they are not well acquainted with those most noble principles of it, *viz.* communion with a suffering, dying and rising Saviour as a representative, pledge and pattern of spiritual dying to sin, and resurrection into holiness, which are contained in *verse* 10. yet I will not disturb them about it, but hope God will discover it to them in his time.

Yet further, as the great doctrines of christianity and the necessary duties of it, are very much distinguished from the less necessary points, and the circumstantials of those duties, by their greater evidence and clearness of revelation; so the more substantial parts of the worship appointed in the gospel, may be distinguished from the less important modes and circumstances. Solemn prayer unto God, preaching of the word, administration of the ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and a due attendance thereon, are plainly and certainly required of us that assume the name of christians in our sacred assemblies. But whether we may borrow assistance from composed forms in preaching, praying, and other administrations; or whether we must renounce all use of forms, books and notes to aid our invention, memory and expression in prayers and sermons, are mere accidental matters, and not written in scripture with so express a pen: So whether the person baptized must be sprinkled or immersed, and whether the communicants at the Lord's table must sit, or lean, stand, or kneel, are less essential considerations, and have been the subjects of dubious enquiry.

Again, in the constitution, order and government of a church, the same distinctions may be made also. That persons professing the name of Christ should agree to walk and worship together at stated seasons in the fellowship of the gospel, seems to be a demand of the law of nature, and sufficiently confirmed by many directions or examples in positive expressions of scripture too; that every such congregation of faithful people, or voluntary society of christians, is a church of Christ; that they ought to seclude or put away from their number, the grossly ignorant, the scandalous and the profane, and to *withdraw from those that walk disorderly;* 2 Thess. iv. 6. that there should be persons appointed to minister to them in holy things, and that the society should honour and maintain them; all these seem to be plain and undoubted duty.

But whether this society may receive and exclude members without or against the consent of their pastor; whether there must be any elders in a church distinct from and inferior to the pastor or bishop; whether the minister needs the imposition of the hands of several presbyters, or the superior episcopal consecration; or whether he be sufficiently ordained by the choice of the society, his solemn acceptance, and his own and their devoting him to God in that office by fasting and prayer; these things are not quite so evident in the writings of the New Testament. And while we are required *to have no fellowship* with the openly wicked, though they are pretended professors of religion, yet we are commanded *to receive the weak in the faith,* and to hold communion with them in common christianity, though we may all differ in doubtful disputations.

SECTION II.

AN INSURRECTION OF CONTENDING CHRISTIANS.

I am easily aware that the men of heat and party, will lift up their hands in wonder, when they read this catalogue and distinction of the affairs of christianity. I see them already kindling into rage against me; they encompass my tent and proclaim war. And upon a review of their numbers, their insurrection and their zeal, I cannot find an advocate wanting for any one sect or party, among the common professors of the religion of Christ in England. I see there "*Merges* and his neighbour *Aspergio;* I find *Sedentius* and *Genicola* both there; *Piscopion*, *Classicus* and *Antipas* are come thither also. Each of them *a prince of their tribe*, and either a head or a very forward member *of the family of their fathers*." Just so the children of Israel began to denounce war against their brethren Gad and Reuben, when they *built an altar of witness* to maintain their communion with the rest of their tribes, while they were dessenters only in point of habitation, and dwelt beyond Jordan: These party-men are full of faith and certainty in every opinion; they embrace none as brethren in Christ who do not wear their garb and livery, and talk not exactly in their language and phrases, nor will they hold communion with those that dissent from them in the least punctilios of the form or worship of christians. "If men depart from the truth, say they, they are in the way of error; and it is all one whether they depart little or much, since they have forsaken the truth, we ought to forsake them."

These warm zealots are not used to admit of any doubt in the smallest circumstantials of religion, and because they have learned of their teachers to affirm all their tenets with equal confidence, they believe that the scripture reveals them all with equal evidence. A metaphor smiling upon their practice, is an express command. They can read their indispensable duty in a single and dubious example. A remote conclusion of their own drawing, at the end of a long chain of consequences, gives them resistless conviction, and appears in their eye as bright, though distant, as the morning-star. A circumstance or two of matter of fact determines their judgment unchangeably, for or against an opinion, which at most is but feebly favoured by those very circumstances; a little criticism on a single Greek word in some single text of scripture, becomes a firm foundation for their faith: They force some text or other to prove every thing which they say, and when they have imposed their sense on the words of the holy writers, they are sure the evangelists and the apostles are of their mind. Each of them have picked up some scraps of the arguments of their party, and they fancy themselves well equipped and furnished for the defence of the truth.

Merges, a very honest man in the main, is newly come out of the water, and glows all over with zeal and assurance, that there can be no baptism without plunging: He makes a mere jest of baby-sprinkling, and declares that if we are not covered with water, we are not *buried with Christ:* No honest man, says he, could ever doubt that John's disciples were immersed at Enon, for the scriptures say, *there was much water there;* John iii. 23.

Aspergio, a bold talker, is as confident that sprinkling, or pouring water on the head, is a true method of baptism, and is ready to say severe things against the practice

of immersion, as if it were not only needless, but, as they are ready to call it, foolish and sinful.

It is plain, saith he, in the word of God, that the apostles *were baptized with the Spirit*, which can never mean that they were dipped or plunged into the Spirit, but only that the Spirit was poured out upon them: And when the Israelites *were baptized into* Moses, it is plain they were only sprinkled with *the cloud and the sea;* Matt. iii. 11. compared with *Acts* ii. 3, 17. and 1 *Cor.* x. 2. and therefore, says he, I wonder that any man should be so weak as to give himself the trouble of dipping when he has such texts as these to prove sprinkling.

Sedentius, a weak and warm dissenter, is just come from St. Paul's cathedral. Being urged by great curiosity, with much ado he obtained leave of his conscience to go thither and see men receive the Lord's-Supper kneeling: As he returns he is almost ready to pronounce damnation against the organs and singing-men, for they are all, saith he, the limbs of Antichrist: He whispers damnation against these idolaters that bow before a piece of bread; for they look as though they worshipped the host, and belonged to Rome. He is very positive that sitting is a posture of absolute necessity in that ordinance, for Jesus and his disciples *did sit and eat;* Mark xiv. 8. 1 Cor. xi. 20. and since it is called the supper of the Lord, we must sit down while we partake of it, for every child knows that men are never wont to kneel at supper.

On the other hand, *Genicola* hates the presbyterians for their scandalous irreverence at the sacrament: What, saith he, dare any man use so clownish and so rude a gesture as sitting, when he receives the seal of the pardon of his sins, and the emblems of the body and blood of Christ? And he forbids all such worshippers from his communion with this sentence, "Procul, O procul este, profani;" that is, "hence ye profane creatures," though he can hardly pretend to bring one text of scripture for his own practice: He is sure also that the surplice, a sign or token of purity, and as our reformers teach, ought to be worn at prayer, for we must lift up hands of purity and innocence when we come before God; and he finds the long white garment in these words, Let all things be done decently and in order; 1 *Cor.* xiv. 40.

To me, saith *Piscopion*, it is as clear as the light, that no man can be a minister of Christ unless the hands of a superior man, even a diocesan bishop, have been upon his head; and all the preachings and ministerings of such a presumptuous wretch, who was not thus ordained, are but *vain babblings*, empty trifles, and impudent usurpations in the name of the Lord: For thus saith the common-prayer-book, which was made by saints and martyrs, "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy scripture and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church; bishops, priests, and deacons." Thus he proceeds triumphant where the civil government is on his side, and will yield to no man in argument or dispute.

Classicus arises in warm opposition to prelacy, and asserts it an indisputable truth, that no minister of Christ is superior to another: I read, saith he, in my Bible, no distinction between bishops and presbyters; they are the same officers in scripture; and the power of synods is so plainly instituted at the council at Jerusalem; *Acts* xv. that I am amazed this should be esteemed a matter of doubt or difficulty; and I am well assured of this, because Timothy had the *hands of presbytery laid upon him;* 1 Tim. iv. 14. there is no man above or below a presbyter has any thing to do in ordaining ministers since the apostles are dead.

Antipas grows impatient at these bold assertions, and asserts with as much boldness, that the power of ordaining all sorts of officers in the church belongs properly to the brethren of a single congregation, and none besides have any authority to meddle with it, since the race of inspired men are dead and gone: The brethren have all the power in their hands, and it is the church or congregation alone that has any manner of right to choose and approve and establish its own pastors, elders, overseers and deacons: For is it not said; *Acts* vi. 3. *Look you out among you seven men*, &c. And if this be done at the choice of deacons, why not of elders too? The learned say, that the word in Greek, which is used for ordaining of elders, signifies the choice or "lifting up the hands of the brethren to vote for them."* Whatsoever particulars are disputed in church government, the power of the people must be ever acknowledged and received as a fundamental and immoveable truth.

Among all these combatants there is not one but is so positive in his own sentiments, that one would think they had received all their opinions by inspiration, or that Christ and his apostles had been precisely of their party, and had written their opinions down in express letters and syllables. And not only are they so assured of the truth of their tenets, but the vast importance of them too: And each of them grows angry that his own particular opinion should be reckoned among the less evident or the less important points of religion: Their fury boils high, and their mistaken zeal and warm ferment of their passion swells every punctilio to a mountain, and makes every particle of their opinions fundamental: They do not observe how their swift career and violence carries each of them beside or beyond their text, and thus they are sometimes hurried on beside the goal of truth, and I am persuaded their assurance always runs too fast for their evidence, and reaches far beyond it.

They commend and practise vehemence as a virtue, and so far forget their Bible as to believe all moderation to be a mere spirit of indifference, and unworthy of a good christian. They all maintain opposite notions, yet by their temper and conduct they all seem to approve each other's zeal for his own party, and with one consent they vote me a mere latitudinarian, a lukewarm professor, a citizen of Laodicea, who has not a spark of zeal for the gospel of Christ, the worship or the discipline of his church.

My dear zealous friends, be calm a little and let me speak before I am condemned, I do not deny many of these things which I call less important to be some way discovered in the New Testament, though not in so express and plain language as you suppose. The chief concerns of the christian church are so far prescribed by positive rules, by examples or just inferences, that a serious reader, who is attentive and unbiassed, and who will exercise his reasoning powers, may find sufficient notices of all necessary truth and duty; according to my measure of light I humbly hope I have found it, and thereby regulate my practice.

But still it must be granted, that things less necessary are not so plainly described as the bigger and more substantial parts of religion, nor graven in characters so large and obvious that every one must needs discern them. Christ Jesus hath been as *faithful in his house as Moses was*, and has delineated the form, pattern and order of it, so far as infinite wisdom thought necessary to carry on the grand designs of grace and the gospel: But some of the lesser pins in this spiritual tabernacle are not so graphically

* Χειροτονία.

decyphered, as that every child may tell whether they must be round or square. There is nothing of so much weight depends upon them, and therefore there was no need for them to be so expressly described under the New Testament, wherein *bodily exercise profits little;* 1 Tim. iv. 8. but worship and religion consist more in what is spiritual and invisible.*

Upon the whole then, since there are different degrees of evidence and clearness, wherewith some of the doctrines of faith, and the rules of worship and order in the New Testament are expressed, there ought also to be found in us different degrees of assent or assurance, wherewith we should receive these doctrines, or these rules of duty: For it is a certain and eternal rule of logic or reason, that "our assent to any proposition ought to be firm or feeble, just in proportion to the different degrees of evidence, whether they be brighter or more obscure."

Here then is a plain and pretty general rule given us, whereby we may judge whether any particular opinion or practice be more or less important, and consequently whether our zeal for it should be warmer or cooler, *viz.* Is the evidence of this practice, or this truth in scripture more bright or cloudy? According to the light of evidence such generally should our zeal be. Violence and fierce contention among christians especially about matters of lesser moment, or of doubtful dispute, are infinitely scandalous to the christian name; and as they tend to ruin and destroy the churches of Christ, so in all ages they have greatly grieved the souls of those who love the interests of christianity and wish well to Sion.

SECTION III.

SOME REASONS WHY THESE DIFFERENCES ARE PERMITTED TO ARISE AMONG CHRISTIANS.

If it would not offend my readers, I would here come to an ingenuous confession, that the different sentiments and dreadful quarrels of christians about some of the lesser things of religion, and the dark and dubious expressions in scripture, wherein some parts of our religion are revealed, have sometimes been a sore temptation and sorrow to my heart, so that I have wished these doubtful disputables had been more clearly determined there. I have been plunged into the briars of this perplexity, when I have seen persons of devout soul, serious and humble, dissent so widely from each other, both in opinion and practice, and that in matters of some moment too, and even after long and honest inquiries into the meaning of God in his word. Under these difficulties I have said in my heart, "Why did not the God of wisdom and of love express every article of belief and duty in words of plainest revelation and precept, that we might have all read the same sense, and been all of one mind? Why did he leave the least point of our religion dubious or obscure, when, with a long foresight, he surveyed all the quarrels and rage, the infinite scandal, the cruelty and the blood, that in future ages would be the consequences of religious disputes?"

I have been pained at my soul, and felt an inward afflicting heaviness in such a meditation as this; nor could I ever satisfy myself with that profane answer which

* See the essay on the "Reasons why the Worship of Christian Churches is not so particularly described as the Jewish," which you may find in the Treatise, about the "Holiness of Times, Places and Persons."

some witty men have given, *viz.* "That God, who might have made the rules of our duty plain and undisputed, chose to express them in words capable of several interpretations, that christians might be liable to be led into many different opinions, that hereby God might please himself with the variety of devotions that were paid him; and that how different soever their sentiments and practices might be, yet that his commands are equally obeyed by all the various kinds of worship and service, which the consciences of men sincerely conceive themselves bound to offer." This notion inclines to that wild opinion, which supposes that any forms or methods of worship are all equally acceptable to God, that there are more true religions than one: This favours so much of the deist and the libertine, and the disciples of the leviathan, that I could never admit it into my assent.

Yet it must be granted that his wisdom had some very valuable ends to attain in the way of providence, by permitting so many differences among christians; and if we had been secretaries to the King of heaven when he formed his decrees, we might have known perhaps some of these awful "arcana" of his government; but *who has been his counsellor*, or to whom has he given an account of these matters? *His paths are in the great deep*, and his providences are trackless through *the mighty waters; how unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out;* Rom. xi. 35. I dare not pretend to write a complete "rationale" on all his infinite and impenetrable designs; yet my faith assures me that they have all the highest and divine reason in them. And I will take the freedom here to mention some of those considerations that have silenced my clamorous thoughts, pleased my enquiry, satisfied my conscience, and vanquished the dark temptation.

First. By these doubtful disputables among the accidental things of religion, God tries our sincerity, whether we will hold fast the substantials. The constancy and courage of a soul devoted to God is exercised and proved amidst the clamours and noisy contests of the men of party and angry zeal; and when it persevereth in a course of christianity, notwithstanding all these stumbling-blocks, it approves itself to God, its Judge and Rewarder. The differences of true christians in some parts of their faith and worship, have frighted and scandalized the hypocrite and the giddy professor; their heads have been turned round *with every wind of doctrine*, because their hearts have not been established in the way of holiness; they have cast off all the articles and practices of religion, because they find so many sects divided by their little particularities, and cannot precisely determine every circumstance of truth and duty. *There were divisions* and parties, schisms and sects in the Corinthian church, and they *must be*, saith the apostle, *that they that are approved may be made manifest among you;* 1 Cor. xi. 19. Our Lord Jesus forewarns his disciples that *offences will come*, and it is not possible that it should be otherwise; there shall be variance and strife in a man's own household: *But blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me; he that persevereth to the end the same shall be saved;* Luke xvii. 1. Matt. xi. 6. There are many things in the christian religion that become *stones of stumbling, and rocks of offence*; blessed are the upright that hold on their course and resolution for heaven, and whose feet *stumble* not *upon these dark mountains*, because of their neglect to search out the truth, or their wilful obstinacy in dangerous errors.

Secondly, Not only our sincerity towards God, but our charity towards our fellow-christians is hereby put to the trial, and charity is the very livery of the disciples of

Christ. *Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another;* John xiii. 35. The Lord hath commanded all his sheep to wear this mark of distinction from the world, how different soever their lesser opinions are among themselves. Where I behold the image of Christ my Lord stamped in legible characters upon my neighbour, can I love him with warm affection, though he never frequents the same place of worship with me, though he wears a garment of another shape and colour, prays in a set form of words which I cannot perfectly approve, and subscribes a creed of different expressions, though the same in sense and meaning? Can I receive this good man into my very soul, who eats nothing but herbs, and will not sit down at my table because flesh is eaten there? Can I love him at my heart that loves Jesus the Lord, though he will not religiously observe the festival of his birth or ascension? Or do these little words Christmas and Holy-Thursday set my heart at a distance from him, and make him forfeit all my charity? Such queries as these may be a touchstone of our graces, and the test of true love to Christ and his saints.

There seems to be something of this design in our Lord Jesus Christ, when he ordered his servant Paul to write the fourteenth chapter to the Romans, where the apostle, though he gives a hint of his own opinion and liberty in the gospel, with regard to meats and days, yet he doth not impose the same observations and abstinences on other christians; and though he was inspired yet he leaves these things still indifferent, and calls them *doubtful disputations.* Now as *the trial of our faith, through manifold temptations, is much more precious than that of gold that perishes,* so the trial of our love passing through the smoky fires of contention and dispute, and not mingling therewith, is discovered to be a pure divine flame, and *shall be found to praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen we love;* 1 Pet. i. 7, 8.

Thirdly, Perhaps our Lord might leave some lesser points of religion more obscurely expressed in his word, because he designed to continue a ministry in his church to the end of the world, or till he came again. While other christians have their hours and thoughts engrossed by the cares of this life, and want leisure and skill and means to acquaint themselves with all the difficult and more abstruse parts of religion, it is the business of the men that are honoured and employed in the sacred office *to give themselves to reading,* to search into *the hidden things of God,* and explain the more doubtful paragraphs of his word unto men.

I grant that the first and grand design of their studies and public labours should be to preach the gospel of the grace of God and reconciliation by Jesus Christ, and to make the necessary articles of faith and practice plain to the meanest soul: But a minister is also required to converse not only with those *scriptures which will make him wise to* final *salvation,* but with those also which may *throughly furnish him to every good word and work;* 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. that he may *know how to speak a word in season* to every weary soul, and to draw consciences out of perplexity which are vexed with scruples of less important things; to instruct them in the mind and will of Christ about the methods of his worship, and the order of his church, *to shew them the pattern and fashion of the house* of God, *and all the ordinances,* and the *forms and the laws thereof:* And that is a part of his duty, at proper seasons, in some of his public ministrations; for he must conceal nothing *of the counsel of God* from them, that may be useful or profitable to men: The methods of his worship, and institutions of his

gospel, should be treasured up in his heart; and upon proper occasions, of private visit and conference, *the lips of the priest should* make it appear that they *keep knowledge*, that the law may be sought at his mouth, *for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts;* Mal. ii. 7.

Not that every man is bound to pay an implicit faith and blind obedience to the opinions and dictates of his bishop or presbyter. This is popish slavery wheresoever it is practised, and popish tyranny where it is commanded: But christians ought to give due attention to the advice and counsel of such *as are set over them in the Lord;* Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. Such as are solemnly devoted to the ministry of the gospel, and have addicted themselves to the study and search of the scriptures, and are chosen by the people to be their teachers, and set apart for that office in the way they best approve; and so far as their advice is conformable to the written word, they are to receive it as from some of the messengers of Christ.

We may humbly suppose a fourth design which God had in his eye when the sacred penman wrote so many verses of holy scripture, which God knew were so difficult to be interpreted; and that is, that no christian might put the Bible out of his own hands, or neglect to read and meditate and study the word of God; and that together with their reading they might constantly implore the presence of the Spirit, the enlightener and the comforter, to lead them into all truth. It is the duty of every man, so far as his capacity and opportunities of life will admit, to study the holy scriptures himself, and to see with his own eyes what he must believe, and what he must practise.

We should imitate the example of the noble Bereans; Acts xvii. 11. *who searched the scriptures* with diligence, and brought the sermons of Paul himself unto that sacred touch-stone, to see if the things which he spoke were true or no: And after all our study, we shall find such difficulties that will convince us of the necessity of depending upon a higher teacher, even the Holy Spirit. Our blessed Saviour commands that we *search the scriptures*, and pray for the Spirit too; *John* v. 39. *Luke* xi. 9, 13. And St. Paul prays unto God that he would give to the saints which were at Ephesus, *that Spirit of wisdom and revelation to enlighten the eyes of their understanding;* Eph. i. 17. This *unction* which true believers *have from the holy one*, makes known to them *all things* necessary to salvation; 1 *John* ii. 20. And though we have no ground to expect that he will unfold to us every lesser difficulty, while we live in this world; yet we may humbly hope that in those things which regard the forms of his own worship, and the means of his own visible glory amongst men, he will by degrees let some divine rays of light into the mind of him that seeks after truth with great diligence, fervent prayer, and most sincere designs. There are many instances to be given of plain christians that have been made the favourites of the enlightening Spirit, and have arrived at uncommon knowledge in christianity by these methods.

A fifth blessed end, and which is certainly attained in the providence of God, by leaving so many disputables in religion, is, that our souls are hereby drawn out to long for heaven, and pant after the state where there is no contention, no dispute. This prospect renders those happy regions more desirable whilst we are here, and more abundantly welcome hereafter.

It is impossible that any controversy should there arise to interrupt the worship of the church triumphant. It is eternally impossible to divide them into parties, or to disturb their repose. The doctrines of their profession are all written as with sun-beams, they

are no longer the articles of faith, but the objects of sight: We shall *be all taught of God, we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.* So much of the Holy Spirit dwells in all the saints, as a perpetual spring of revelation and wisdom. The discipline of that church can occasion no disputes, for the Son of God, in our nature, is the pastor or bishop, he keeps *the keys of heaven* in his own hands, and the *keys of hell and death.* The soul that is once admitted into that fellowship shall abide like *a pillar in the temple of his God, and shall go no more out;* Rev. iii. 12. but the hypocrite and the unclean shall never enter there. The worship that is paid there is with perfect uniformity of mind and affection amongst all the happy spirits; an unanimous consent in self-abasement, divine honour and love; and perhaps when our bodies shall be raised again to make a visible church in heaven, worship may be performed with a glorious liberty, and with such a pleasing variety of form as glorified nature shall dictate, and our exalted reason approve; but still with the exercise of the same perfect love and delight among the worshippers, and under the influence of the same Spirit.

O the happiness of that upper region, where all the inhabitants are of one mind and one heart! Every doubt shall for ever vanish, for we shall behold all things without a cloud. *In thy light, O Lord, we shall see light* and enjoy it; Psalm xxxi. 7. Every quarrel shall for ever cease, for we shall dwell in the land of harmony and love. Though our capacities, perhaps, may be of different sizes, yet we shall see all divine truths in the same light, and therefore our sentiments, at least in things of importance, shall differ no more; we shall be united to each other in the same band of love, nor can our affections be separated any more for ever: That light and that love springs from the ever-blessed God; God the Creator communicating himself to all his holy and happy creation, and holding them fast to himself for ever, in and by that glorious person Christ Jesus his Son and image; for *in him must all things be gathered together in one, and all things reconciled unto God in him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven;* Col. i. 20. then shall the prophecy of Zechariah be fulfilled, *the Lord shall be king over all the earth, there shall be one Lord, and his name one;* Zech. xiv. 9. in the fullest meaning of that expression; nor shall the saints be distinguished by different parties or denominations, but their hearts and their names shall be all one; according to those expressions of inconceivable glory, wherein our Lord describes the things which are truly unspeakable, all the saints *shall be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;* John xvii. 21.

O with what pleasure have I often read, and methinks would be always reading, those words of a* great man spoken on the funeral of his fellow-saint. "When death shall have discumbered and set us free from all sorts of distempers, and brought us into the state of perfect and perfected spirits, how delectable will the society be, when all shall be full of divine life, light, love and joy, and all freely communicate as they have received freely! But above all that is conceivable in that other state, how delectable will the society be in worship, in the unanimous adoration of the ever-blessed God, Father, Son and Spirit! O the inexpressible pleasure of this consociation in worship perpetually tendered with so absolute a plenitude of satisfaction in the dueness of it, and the gustful apprehension of what those words import, *Worthy art thou, O Lord:* Each one relishing his own

* Mr. Howe's Funeral Sermon for Dr. Bates.

act with just self-approbation and high delight, heightened by their apprehended perfect unanimity, and that there is among them no dissenting vote. Whence it cannot be but to worship God in spirit and in truth, must be to enjoy him, and that he is not under any other notion; a satisfying object of our enjoyment, more than he is the object of our worship."

These are beams of celestial light for souls to drink in, and to live upon them while we are passing onward to these fair mansions through a wilderness of doubts and darknesses. These are words of harmony and love to entertain our ears, and make us deaf to the noise of a wrangling and disputing world. This is a heaven worth wishing for, while we are travelling to it through this tiresome earth, this unhappy stage of vexation and controversy: To this let us look with eyes of ardent expectation, and the devoutest wishes of souls: To this let us all aspire and hasten, who have groaned long under our own ignorance, and been burdened and grieved with the quarrels of the christian churches, and whatsoever name or party we have chosen in our divided opinions, let us unite our hearts and voices in this loud request, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

ESSAY IX.

AN APOLOGY FOR THE DIFFERENT JUDGMENTS AND PRACTICES OF SINCERE CHRISTIANS, THAT ARE WEAK IN KNOWLEDGE.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

GIVE me leave, my dear friend, to make a charitable apology for honest and upright souls, who maintain a strict course of piety and virtue, and yet appear to be unalterably determined for or against the communion of the church of England, upon very slight and feeble grounds: Perhaps we shall learn compassion to the weaknesses of our fellow-christians, if you and I together meditate on these following considerations:

Let us take a survey how many are the circumstances and various occurrences of human life, which do sometimes powerfully determine the opinions even of good and sober men, to one or the other side of this controversy, whether they shall fix their communion in the church of England, or amongst those who separate from it.

Here the first thing that naturally occurs, is the education of different persons, which has a mighty influence to form their opinions, and to fix their practice; and this, it must be confessed, is not in a man's own choice; the providence of the great and blessed God, the over-ruler of all things, determines this affair in a wise and holy manner, whatever the final event may be.

Jonathan goes to worship every Lord's-day where his father goes, and as the child was never led to hear a sermon at a public church, so the youth grows up in a groundless aversion to it, and the man stands at a wider distance, and can hardly be persuaded to venture in. By use and custom from his very childhood, he understands the methods of the dissenters' worship, and the terms that are used in their sermons; and if by any strange occasion he is led to the church of England, he finds no profit by hearing a clergyman preach, for he does not clearly take in the expressions and the meaning; and it must be acknowledged, many of them have a different way of managing the word of God in their explications of it, different phrases and modes of expression, and too many of them preach doctrines different from their own articles and our common faith; these things are shocking and offensive to the ear, rather than instructing or edifying to a new hearer.

Besides, *Jonathan* has imbibed long prejudices against the modes of worship and ceremonies of the church, the forms, the gestures, the vestments, the responses, &c. and his soul is thereby mightily unfitted for edification by the prayers of the church of England, that are mingled and interwoven with them; his palate is so much disgusted with this sort of entertainment before-hand, that he either disrelishes or neglects what-

ever solid and wholesome food is set before him in the sermon that follows: I will not say, there is nothing of this folly owing to the influences of his education; but it is hard, if not impossible, to amend or prevent all the faults of this kind in the education of children, by the best and wisest of parents.*

These things joined together, put a strong bias upon the judgment of the man, and it is exceeding difficult to be removed; and it is evident that his prayers, his practice in religion, his secret acts of devotion, are all regulated by the instructions he has received from his parents or some of his teachers: This makes his spirit grow uneasy under ceremonious forms, and he is quite untuned for devotion by the very sound of the organ. These things must needs have a mighty force on the minds of young sincere creatures beginning their course of religion and christianity, to establish them in the non-conformist way. And I might also add, how rude and indecent a thing the plain and natural worship of the dissenters appears to one, that has been bred up to ornament and ceremony in the several parts of worship in the established church. By education and custom a particular form of religion is so mingled with their nature, and wrought into their constitution, that you might as soon alter their palate, and change their taste of meats, as you can persuade their souls to dislike the ministry under which they have been brought up, and to forsake the mode of worship to which they have been trained. They are so positive

* Since I have occasion, in this place to mention the education of children, amongst persons of the established church, and those that have separated from it, I could scarce excuse it to my own conscience, if I should neglect to make this solemn remark on both, *viz.* that there is something very dangerous that is early impressed on the minds of children of the one party and the other, and they unhappily learn it from the different respective catechisms in which they are instructed.

The children who are educated in the church of England, as soon as they have learned to answer "what is their name?" they are immediately told in the next answer, that in their baptism, "they are made the members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." This arises from the doctrine they are generally taught, that baptism and regeneration are much the same thing, or that all men are regenerated by being baptized; whereas in scripture, baptism is but an emblem and representation of such a change of the heart, as regeneration requires and implies; and for want of this distinction, the children usually grow up through all their stations in life without enquiring whether they have had any such real change in their souls, as includes in it repentance for sin, and a turn of soul towards God and godliness, whereby a man is born again and becomes a new creature. And this necessary change, upon which the favour of God, and an interest in the salvation of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven depend, is very grossly and shamefully neglected by them through their whole lives, they always supposing as they have been taught, that all this work is done in baptism.

And for this reason many divines of the church of England have heartily wished that either these words in the catechism were a little altered, or that this answer should never be taught to children without explaining the meaning of it. Among the dissenters, one part of the education is usually learning the catechism written by the assembly of divines at Westminster. Now in the 19th answer it is said, "That all mankind by their fall,—are under the wrath of and curse of God, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever:" And some persons have been so grossly unwise, as to assert under this influence, that there are children of a span long suffering the vengeance of God in hell, for their interest in the sin of Adam. Now the very hint of such a notion frights children terribly, and while they are required to *love God with all their hearts*, it gives them a very terrible and cruel notion of the great and blessed God, who has ordained young children to these everlasting torments for the sin of Adam. There are some that deny this answer, and renounce this doctrine roundly.

Indeed there is one author that has endeavoured to explain it in a moderate way, and to make a just distinction upon this subject, and that is in the last question of a book, called "The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind." There it is shewn that all good christians, by their faith in Christ, are become the children of Abraham, and that they and their infant children have an interest in the promise made to Abraham, Gal. iii. 26, 29. viz. *that God would be their God*, and the God of their seed, which gives abundant hope for the children of good parents dying in infancy, that they are translated to the blessedness of heaven, and the hope of a joyful resurrection by the covenant of Abraham. And it is the children of the wicked, who have never accepted of the covenant of grace, are left under the curse, that is, of temporal death, which Adam had incurred for himself and his posterity, and that without any prediction or promise of any resurrection at all. Now I speak of those who never sinned actually, nor enjoyed a state of personal trial for themselves in this world. "See the original writer." When these things will be corrected in the education of children, of the one side or the other, it is only the providence of God can determine.

they are in the right, that they never had any thought of calling these things to a new examination.

Secondly, The prejudice of the mind in favour of the dissenters grows yet stronger, if *Jonathan* has found his soul awakened to a fear of hell, and been effectually convinced of sin by the terrors of the law under the preaching of some Boanerges, some son of thunder in a meeting-house: and has been afterwards led gently into the knowledge of Jesus Christ the Saviour, and has been taught to apply himself unto him for salvation by humble faith. If the Spirit of God has made the preaching of pardon and grace, by a dissenting minister, effectual to calm the surges of his troubled conscience, and to lead him in the way of peace and holiness towards heaven, perhaps he feels his passions refined, his sinful appetites mortified, his temper changed from earthly and carnal, to spiritual and heavenly, how naturally will his whole soul be carried out to love this ministry? And he would not willingly absent himself one day from the teachings of this Barnabas, this son of consolation; he despises all the finer flourishes of eloquence, he can take no pleasure in the more polite, and perhaps more argumentative discourse of a doctor or bishop in the church of England; but where he has found light and food, and rest for his dark, and distressed, and hungry soul, thither he will go constantly to worship, and he calls that the sanctuary of the Lord, without once enquiring whether a parish church may not be the sanctuary of the Lord too; nay perhaps his passion for the dissenters may rise so high as to deny the presence of God in the assemblies of the established church, or to allow very little of it there.

And by the same false method of reasoning may a churchman, whose soul has been brought to repentance and holiness by the ministry of the public church on which he has attended, almost hate the name of a non-conformist, and severely inveigh against them all as schismatics and foolish teachers, when perhaps he never ventured into a meeting-house, nor heard one sermon in any of their assemblies. So far is it possible for piety, ignorance, and prejudice to meet in the same mind: But our God, who knows the frame of human nature, looks down and pities and forgives. A hearty tendency towards God, and a pursuit of heaven is well-pleasing in his sight; though perhaps the traveller, through ignorance, takes many a wrong step, and performs many a duty not exactly conformable to the directions of the word.

Now, though this argument be sufficient to determine him to be a christian, in opposition to other religions, because other religions have not this power to sanctify him, yet it ought not to be sufficient for ever to determine him to a particular party of christians, because it was not the particular opinions of that party, but the substantial and great doctrines of christianity or the gospel, which are professed and pretended to by both parties, that were so powerful to the turning of his heart towards God.

After all this discourse, I would not be understood as though I encouraged this laziness of men, and neglect of due and just reasoning; no, for reason is the talent that God hath given to be used in the affairs of religion, and he hath given us the rule of his own word for our determination, by which all our worship ought to be regulated, and not by human inventions; and men are highly guilty in their neglect hereof: But a gracious God will forgive, for he knows our frame and our frailty. I believe God doth accept of such inward, sincere, and experimental arguments as vulgar christians use to make or keep themselves churchmen or dissenters, calvinists or arminians. If

they feel their souls raised to a more heavenly frame, and effectually engaged to *the love of God*, religion and justice, by attending occasionally on a ministry different from their education, sometimes they will be ready to separate even from a true church to which they belonged, for want of knowing the guilt and terrors and damnation that some men include in that hard word schism; and I persuade myself that a gracious God will accept of their upright designs and their honest motives, will pardon their separation, though it should prove unwarrantable, and bless their new communion to the advantage of their souls.

Thirdly, But suppose a man should forcibly divest himself of all former aversions and inclinations to the separate or the established churches, and enter into a sober search, and solemn debate with himself about the merits of the cause; how few are there, whose necessary affairs of life allow them time enough to go through the study of these laborious and entangled controversies? How small a part of mankind, that are born to secular affairs, can, in their few hours of leisure, find out the depth of some of these difficulties? Who is sharp enough on the sudden to distinguish truth in the midst of the clouds of dust that are cast on it by the litigious wrangle of all parties?

The soul of many a tradesman is but just of a size with his shop and business, and hath not strength of parts or improvement to attain great and accurate knowledge in any thing besides; and those whose ingenuity is greater, may easily waste all the spare hours of their life in treading the mazes of dispute about forms and ceremonies, and at last find themselves bewildered: Now I question whether such a man's head would lie easy upon a dying pillow, who had spent his time among briars and thorns, and neglected the fruit of the tree of life, or tasted but very little of it; he has been dwelling upon the moss and the ivy, and not gathered the product of those eminent branches of our holy religion, whence he might have extracted sweet cordials for a languishing and fainting hour.

Fourthly, Again, how very few are there amongst the giddy race of men that can so far annihilate their old opinions, and refrain so long from embracing new ones, till they have made a thorough scrutiny into the arguments and pretensions on both sides? Who can dwell for months together in the uneasy state of dubitation? Who is there that has power enough over his own thoughts, as to hold his judgment in suspense for a considerable season, till the matter in question be fairly debated, and brought to an issue in the court of reason and scripture? How ready are we to incline our assent one way or another, as the various occurrences of life present shadows of argument for either opinion? A story of a wicked clergyman of the church will warp the enquiring soul of a plebeian towards a meeting-house: and an old song of Charles the martyr will determine another's judgment against the cruel dissenters, and make him a complete churchman. A flash of rhetoric, a shew of reason, a warm sermon, and affections raised by a Tillotson at Westminster, or a Mead at Pinner's Hall, will immediately turn the mind from its equilibrium; and you know when a balance is just turned, though it be but by a grain of weight, it falls effectually on that side, and sometimes almost irrecoverably too.

When we have thrown off all old prejudices, it is not easy to secure ones self from new ones. When we have so far gained the victory over education and custom as to retain our ancient opinions, we are apt to fall insensibly under the power of the opposite

doctrines, and become captives and slaves to new notions, merely because they are new. Novelty is as great a prejudice to fair reasoning as antiquity; though perhaps not so universally prevailing. And there is many a giddy and headstrong youth that has hastily embraced maxims and practices contrary to those of his parents, to shew how bravely he has broke all the fetters of education, and to make it appear that he thinks freely. When we push the boat off from the shore where it has long stuck in the mud, it is hard to prevent its being stranded on the adverse side. It is exceeding difficult to keep the mind in this medium of suspense till right reason determine it; it is very troublesome to maintain the judgment in a poise till some weighty and solid argument sink one of the scales downward, and equitably decide the depending strife of opinions; there is need of continual caution and wary motions of thought: A doubting spirit is in pain, and willing to be released. We are very desirous to believe somewhat, though upon slight grounds, that our souls may be at ease, and fall to practise.

Fifthly, But suppose men should have leisure, and books, and other advantages, joined with resolution and patience enough to endure the pain of dubitation, and the long fatigue of deep study and thoughtfulness; yet how small is the number of those that are capable to distinguish betwixt real and apparent reason; especially in subjects where the differences are of so nice and intricate a kind? How few understandings are so acute, how few judgments so solid and just, so well formed and well improved, as to determine controversies so long and so much darkened? Who can see through all the false shows and pretences of argument, and discern the true gold from that which only glisters.

Turn your eyes inward my friend, and behold a soul there that has more knowledge and judgment than hundreds of the animals that are round about you, and that you are forced to converse with; and yet after all your unbiassed searches and labours, and earnest prayers, how hard a thing you find it to resolve the point, whether you ought to remain in the communion of a dissenting church, or become a separatist from them, and unite yourself to the church of England. Now, if all your leisure, your advantages, and your application, cannot fix your assent and practice, infer then how vain a thing it is to expect that reason and argument should constantly determine and govern a blind, a rash, a ruined, and a wretched world.

I confess, in things of greater importance, and necessity to salvation, our directions lie so plain, as to lead the most stupid souls that are honest and sincere, to the knowledge of truth and duty, unless it be here and there a man who violently breaks through the very language of scripture, and runs into great errors or irregularity of practice: But in things of less moment, how impossible is it that the generality of mortals should build every lesser opinion of theirs upon solid foundations and unshaken grounds? Or how can we expect they should be able to defend every smaller circumstance of their practice by just reasonings?

If I were to recapitulate these things in short, I would draw up my charitable conclusion thus: Since our first apostasy from God has so perverted and spoiled our rational powers, and enslaved our minds to so many prejudices and passions; since the impressions of education and custom are unavoidable and necessary, deep and strong; since the affairs of the world that is under a divine curse, are so justly and unhappily ill con-

stituted; since capacity, leisure, application, humility, and prayer, are all found together but in very few persons; and since the divine oracles, in matters less necessary, have so much obscurity in themselves, and so much thicker darkness cast upon them by contending parties, why should we be so much amazed or so angry, to see so many different sentiments and practices amongst men of honest piety, and desirous of truth?

Farewell, thou dear companion of my studies, and if your light and knowledge should be so far improved by your further enquiries, as to lead you away from that communion, and those methods of worship wherein we have so often and so delightfully joined; yet I hope that upon the review of this letter, you will maintain a very charitable opinion of

Your unenlightened friend, &c.

SELF-LOVE AND VIRTUE

RECONCILED ONLY BY

RELIGION;

OR

AN ESSAY

TO PROVE

THAT THE ONLY EFFECTUAL OBLIGATION OF MANKIND TO PRACTISE VIRTUE, DEPENDS ON THE EXISTENCE AND WILL OF GOD.

TOGETHER WITH AN

OCCASIONAL PROOF OF THE NECESSITY OF REVELATION.

WRITTEN ON OCCASION OF MANY SMALL TREATISES ON THIS SUBJECT APPEARING OF LATE IN THE WORLD.

SELF-LOVE AND VIRTUE

RECONCILED ONLY BY RELIGION;

OR, AN ARGUMENT,

TO PROVE THAT THE ONLY EFFECTUAL OBLIGATION OF MANKIND TO PRACTISE VIRTUE, DEPENDS ON THE EXISTENCE AND WILL OF GOD, &c.

SECTION I.

THE GENERAL PROPOSAL OF THE SUBJECT.

IT has been a great controversy, whether the rules of virtue, and our obligations to practise them, be eternal and immutable in themselves, antecedent to our conceptions of the being of a God; or whether they depend on his will and appointment. In things which are merely speculative, it is very evident and certain, that there are many eternal and unchangeable truths; as, "two and two make four: a circle is most comprehensive of all figures, and a right angle is larger than an acute." Note, By eternal truths we can mean no more than this; that in whatsoever moment of the eternity, past or to come, these ideal truths were or shall be proposed to an intelligent being, they must be assented to, and acknowledged to be true: But any real, eternal existence of them, cannot be supposed, without a God, in whose mind alone they could exist.

And when we call them unchangeable, our meaning is this, that we cannot conceive it possible, that any circumstances, or situation of things, or even the will of a God, should ever alter the nature of these truths, or make them cease to be true. But the case is not quite so evident to us, and so indisputable with regard to moral or practical subjects, however these may be supposed to be as certain in themselves. It may admit of a doubt, whether all the rules of virtue, and more especially, whether the obligations of mankind to practise them, are eternal and unchangeable; and that even before the supposition of the existence of a God, or without any regard to such a supreme Governor.

It must be granted, that there are persons of known learning and piety who have chosen this side of the question: And yet it must be acknowledged too, that it grates a little upon some religious minds, to hear of eternal and unchangeable obligations lying on men, which are independent on the will or appointment of God; or even upon a supposition there were no God. I would not choose to see such sort of suppositions introduced, if it be possible to secure the rules and practice of virtue without them. I think that these eternal rules of virtue, whatsoever they be, and especially our obligations to practise them, stand in such a close connection with the being and the will of God, as Governor of the world, that if one could help it they should not be even divided and separated in thought.

But since these sort of suppositions are and will be made, I beg leave to examine, according to the best rules of my reason, how far this doctrine of eternal and unchangeable obligations to practise virtue may be supported; and I will endeavour it in these following positions:

SECTION II.

THERE ARE ETERNAL FITNESSES IN HUMAN ACTIONS AND IN DIVINE.

It is granted, there is an eternal fitness and unfitness of things in nature, or if I might so express it, in our ideas of the natural world, which do not depend on the will or appointment of God; and these are perfectly unchangeable. "A globe is not fit to fill up the space of a hollow cube; nor is a triangle fit to fill up the area of a circle." Note, By the eternal fitness of things, we must understand the same as before I said concerning eternal truths, *viz.* that in themselves they are mere abstracted ideas; and can have no real, eternal existence but in the mind of God. Let it be observed also that this eternal fitness of things does not require the actual existence of these things from eternity: If the mere ideas of these things have a necessary connection together, they may be called eternal fitnesses, in the sense I have explained. I think there can remain no reasonable doubt or contest upon this matter. The supposition of a God, or no God, seems to make no alteration in these abstracted ideas.

There seems also to be an eternal fitness or unfitness in the actions of single, rational and sensible beings. Note, Though we are here speaking chiefly of mankind, yet I call every rational being sensible, whether it be united to flesh or blood or no; because it is conscious and perceptive of pleasure or pain, happiness or misery. I say therefore, it is fit that every rational being should preserve itself, at least so far as it may be made happy; and it is unfit it should destroy itself, or permit its own destruction. It is fit a rational being should seek its own general, ultimate, or supreme happiness;* and it is unfit that such a being should procure its own misery, or permit it, if he can avoid it. Nature, self-love, and reason, seem to dictate the same thing. This self-preservation and self-felicitation, are inwrought in our natural constitution; and our rational powers confirm it. These may be called single or personal duties of nature, or natural obligations, considering nature both as sensible and rational.

There seems also an eternal fitness and unfitness of things in the social life. It is fit that rational, social beings should make one another easy and happy, and preserve each other's life and peace; and it seems unfit that any of them should make their neighbours uneasy and unhappy, or that they should destroy them.† It is fit therefore that social beings should keep their contracts, should do justice to all around them, should not rob or steal one another's property; and that they should love each other, and do good, and be grateful to their benefactors. This is properly called "social virtue."

* I use the words "general, ultimate and supreme happiness," to distinguish it from any particular present pleasures, which a man may and ought to deny or refuse by the mere rules of reason, when they stand in competition with his general and ultimate happiness.

† These expressions are general indeed, and must include some limitation; but the reason and nature of things gives this plain limitation to them, *viz.* When men have not forfeited their life or their ease, by criminal actions, they are to be treated well by their fellow-beings.

All these seem to be rules derived from the very nature of things; that is, supposing such rational, and sensible, and social beings to exist, they are directed by the eternal reason of things to behave with justice and goodness towards each other. These rules seem to carry an obligation with them by the light of reason. Note, by the word "obligation" in this place, we cannot mean any authoritative or suasive influence from the will, or law, or authority of a superior; since we are speaking of the eternal fitness of these things, without any consideration of the being of a God. Obligation, in this place therefore, can mean nothing but the mere reasonable fitness of our doing or not doing such or such a thing in social life; or that this is the dictate of our reasoning powers.

If there be a God, an universal Maker and supreme Lord of all, there are eternal truths and fitnesses which relate to himself, *viz.* that he must always act according to the perfections of his nature as a single, self-existent and supreme being. That he is not always bound by the same rules which bind social beings or fellow-creatures; for he is not bound to do all the good he can, or to hinder all the evil he can. Again; that God cannot alienate his own right to any thing, or give it irrevocably to a creature, but by his own express promise; and therefore his gifts, without an absolute promise, are but loans, resumable at pleasure. That he cannot originally make a creature sinful or miserable. That he has a right to the obedience of his creatures. That he cannot command his creatures to do any thing unfit to be done. That he will be just and true to all his creatures; and that he will not finally deal alike with the righteous and the wicked. There is therefore a reward for the righteous, &c. I mention all these here, though they are not all necessary to my present subject; yet it is good to keep them much in our view, in order to justify God in many parts of his divine conduct.

Now if there actually be a God, these eternal truths or fitnesses may be said, in some sense, to lay an obligation on God to act according to them, that is, his perfections are such that he will govern and regulate his own actions constantly and unchangeably by these eternal fitnesses or unfitnesses of things: For since he is self-sufficient for his own preservation and happiness; and since none of these eternal fitnesses or unfitnesses can possibly stand in opposition to his own eternal being or blessedness, nor can they bring any inconvenience on him, he can have no possible motive, or reason, or obligation to act contrary to this fitness or unfitness of things; and the rectitude of his own nature seems unchangeably to require such a conduct.

And if this be granted, then there is a sufficient foundation laid for the proof of all God's moral attributes by our ideas of his natural perfections, and our ideas of the eternal rules of justice, veracity and goodness; and there is sufficient assurance that he will act according to them.

SECTION III.

IN HUMAN ACTIONS THESE FITNESSES MAY CONTRADICT EACH OTHER.

But in beings of an inferior nature, before we consider whether there be a God or no, the case is not the same; for it is possible that some of these rules of reason, or at least, the obligations to practise them, may, seemingly, or really clash with each other. As for instance, in what we have called single or personal duties: Do we not all agree, that

a man is obliged to preserve his own life, and also to make himself happy by such a steady dictate of his own nature, as seems essential or eternal? Is not this piece of self-love inwrought into his very constitution and frame of nature? And do not his reasoning powers confirm it? But *Miserino* lies in extreme anguish of gout or stone, or broken limbs; and he seems to be encouraged, and even required, by his reasoning powers, to try to divest himself of all life, and of all possible happiness together; for he judges it better not to be, than to be miserable. In this case self-murder, or the destruction of his being, would be a dictate of reason; for it would be a sort of self-felicitation, though it stands directly contrary to self-preservation.

Again, in another case of single or personal duties. *Philedon* is a gentleman of good reason and learning, but of such strong and importunate passions and appetites, that every degree of restraint is a sensible pain to him. He sat down in a very calm and composed hour to judge whether he should pursue pleasure or virtue. His reason told him much of the eternal fitness of things, and what a noble victory it would be to deny his appetites and govern his passions; and that he was obliged, by the fitness of things, to follow the rules of strict virtue constantly. But on the other hand, self-love and nature, with their strong sensibilities represented to him the constant and intense toil, the uneasy fatigue and pain of contradicting the dictates of his nature and his appetite of pleasure; and that he never would have one easy day in the course of strict virtue. His reason balanced these things together, and finally resolved, that both his own rational powers, and the fitness of things, required that *Philedon* should pursue his highest happiness, and that was to indulge his sensual inclinations in the highest degree; for this was the ultimate happiness he could expect: And as soon as he found diseases, or pains, or poverty come upon him, he might finish them all at once by a dagger, or by opium, and thus enter into eternal ease and indolence. Now in this case all his obligations to personal virtue, as well as to self-preservation, seem to be out-reasoned and overcome by the dictates of self-felicitation.

And there are yet plainer instances of such contradictions between single and social duties, *viz. Famelico*, a strong man, lies starving; and he sees his weaker and hungry neighbour with one only piece of bread in his hand; reason dictates that the strong man should not rob his neighbour of his property, especially where this property is his very life: And yet reason, self-love and nature, join to dictate that *Famelico* should save his own life, and procure his own ease from the pain of hunger; which he can do no otherwise but by taking away the bread, and perhaps life from his neighbour. Again, *Naufragus* is just drowning; but he sees his neighbour supported by a little plank, which is just big enough to save one man's life; reason and virtue dictate that, though he be stronger, he should not drown his neighbour, by taking away the plank: Yet his reason and nature seem to dictate also, that *Naufragus* should save himself, though it be by taking the plank away from his weaker neighbour, and leave him to be drowned. Yet again, reason dictates that *Irus* should pay what he has borrowed, and that at the promised time; and yet, perhaps, this payment takes away all his subsistence, and exposes him to extreme hunger and death; and then both reason and nature at the same time dictate, that *Irus* should save himself from death, or secure himself from pinching hunger, whatever his neighbour loses or suffers.

Or suppose, in a common shipwreck, a drowning man sees another near him, who has three or four such planks as would each of them save a life: Reason dictates he should

preserve his life, though it be by plundering his neighbour of one of them, if that neighbour refuse to lend or give it him: And yet reason seems to dictate too, that he should not take away his neighbour's property by force. The same may be said concerning loaves of bread, and a man who is starving. Many such crossing incidents as these may be supposed to happen; and, in some of them, it is not only very hard to determine which of these dictates should be obeyed, but it seems to me that these rules of reason may sometimes clash so much with each other, that they cannot be reconciled.

Here, indeed, an objector may start up and say, What; is this a possible thing that reason should contradict reason? Are we of such an absurd composition, and are we placed in such a self-repugnant state by nature, that our supreme powers of direction and action will contradict themselves, or that the fitness of things should stand on both sides? I answer; Yes, if we come into being by chance, or by fate, without a God, then we may be such an absurd mixture, and situated in such a self-repugnant state; and who can disprove it, or who can help it? Surely it can be no wonder if so absurd a principle as fate or chance should produce absurd things.

SECTION IV.

THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD RECONCILES THESE CONTRADICTIONS.

BUT let us wait and enquire a little, how these difficulties may be compromised by the supposition of the being of a God, and whether they can be compromised without the supposition of it. If there be a God, an almighty Maker and Ruler of man, that God, by his will and authority, requires and obliges * man, in his general government of the world, to the same rules of single duty, and of social virtue, which are dictated by the fitness or unfitness of things. This will of God, made known to men, is his law, whether it be natural and written in the heart, or revealed and written in a book. Thus man is obliged by his duty to God, his Maker, as well as to himself, to secure his own being and happiness; and he is obliged by duty to God as well as to his neighbour, to practise every social virtue.†

* Here it is granted, the word "obligation" signifies an authoritative or suasive influence from the will, command or authority of a superior: But if you enquire, why are we obliged by the will or command of a superior? The fundamental and ultimate reason is still, because the fitness of things dictates it, that we should obey a rightful superior. So that the ultimate ground of all obligation is still the dictate of reason concerning the fitness of things. But if you will proceed further in your enquiries, wherein it appears that the fitness of things require such obedience? I answer, because such a superior can reward it, and punish the neglect of it, and therefore it is the interest as well as the duty of the inferior to obey; and this increases or doubles the fitness of such obedience, as shall be shewn immediately.

† It must be confessed, there have been some cases in scripture wherein God seems to have commanded men to act, in appearance, contrary to these eternal fitnesses, &c. in point of social virtue: As in the case of Abraham's offering up his son, and the Israelites destroying the Canaanites. But we must distinguish between these two things, viz. there is God's common providence, or his general and ordinary rules of government, which he has made known to the reason of man, whereby man, considered as a sociable creature, is obliged to practise all social virtues in his own transactions with his fellow-creatures: And there is God's special providence, or his extraordinary orders or commands, which he may make known by some powerful revelation to men or angels, merely considered as his intruments to maintain his own divine rights, and to resume what he has given to any of his creatures, whether it be life or property, and which he

Now if personal duties, even thus confirmed, should chance to clash with one another, or with any of the social virtues, how shall they be reconciled? I answer; By religion, by which name I mean a due regard to God as a commander of virtue, and a rewarder of it. I shall make this appear first in the case of our single or personal duties. If there be a God, he has made us to live for his use and service; and we ought not to oppose his will, and destroy ourselves. He who hath made us, hath a right to appoint our situation in what state he pleases; and while he confines our beings to this world of flesh and blood, though it be with pain and anguish; yet it is not fit that *Miserino* should depart hence by destroying his animal life, or his being, against his Maker's will: But he should trust in that God who can find ways of relief which we think impossible; or who can and will reward us in a future state and life, with supreme felicity for what we endure with patience in this life, by the mere motive of submission to his will; and this is religion.*

Thus our reason, upon the balance, in the most miserable circumstances, will supremely dictate to us, that it is our duty, and our highest interest, to preserve our lives, and to bear this present life and pain, till almighty God relieve us by healing, or release us to a state of ultimate felicity by death. And thus the obligations to self-preservation and self-felicitation are united or reconciled.

In like manner *Philedon* lies under plain obligations to God and to himself, to restrain his appetites and passions, be they never so strong, within the bounds and rules of virtue; for this is the will or law of God, who made him, and has a right to govern him: And, be his life prolonged never so far, yet constant self-denial, and strict virtue, is his duty all the way; for he may expect divine rewards and supreme or ultimate felicity in some world to come from that God whose will he obeyed here in this present world, by long and constant self-denial.

The same is evident also in social life. If there be a God, it is evident to reason, that this God, who is the common Father of all his creatures, did not make a whole society for the sake of one man, but every single man is rather made for the sake of society; and the interests of a society are of superior importance to the interest of each single person. Therefore, in the view of God their common Father, who is wise and just, the preservation and happiness of a whole society of creatures which he has made, by their steady practice of social virtue even though it be to the detriment of any single man, is to be preferred to the preservation and happiness of any single man, with the detriment or danger of a whole society. Now a whole society would be injured by any man's wilful neglect of social virtues: Therefore the will or law of God requires, that social virtue be practised by every man; and that oftentimes with the neglect of any

might justly resume by lightning or pestilence. Now, according to the ordinary rules of God's government, made known by reason, every man is bound to practise strict social virtue to his neighbour: This is agreeable to the fitness of things. But according to the extraordinary orders made known by pure revelation, man may be required, as Abraham and the Israelites were in these instances, to become the instruments of God in maintaining his own divine rights, and resuming his gifts from men. This will go a great way to justify those actions, as being still agreeable to the eternal fitness of things, especially if the rights of a God are considered as superior to the rights of a fellow-creature. But these difficulties have had other particular solutions given them: And since they are not necessary to the present point of debate, I would not bring them in here into this dispute, to embarrass the present argument with them, though I throw this hint into the margin.

* See the connection between human virtue and divine reward, manifested and confirmed. Section VI.

single man's present interest, where they are inconsistent.* Now an obedience to this will of God is religion. And yet this God, who is a wise and righteous Governor of the universe, and is good to all his creatures, does not forbid the rational dictate of self-interest, that is, self-preservation, or self-felicitation, to exert itself in a proper manner, but only gives it another turn or direction in particular cases: For even the light of nature and reason teaches us, that this righteous and almighty Governor may be expected to recompense present self-denial, performed in mere obedience to his will, with future life and felicity; for he can punish or reward after death. And thus our better life, and our ultimate felicity, are secured even by those acts of social virtue wherein we expose, or lose our present life or present happiness. This trust in the divine recompence is religion.

And upon this view of things a starving or a drowning man, if he be never so much stronger than his neighbour, may deny himself of some present advantage or comfort, or may neglect to secure life itself, in order to keep the rule of justice, and to obey his Maker therein. Reason itself will dictate to him this self-denial and steady virtue; for hereby he not only obeys his Maker's will, but he pursues his own best interest, and his highest happiness, even the favour of his Maker, and the reward of his virtue, from the righteous Governor of the world. And he may look upon himself as most powerfully obliged to practise such social virtue and self-denial by the will and authority of that God who can and will reward him.

And thus the strict rule of social virtue, built on the reason and fitness of things, will not clash with the other rule of reason, which is also built on the fitness of things, *viz.* that a rational and sensible being should still pursue self-preservation and self-felicitation. The very supposition of a righteous God, who commands strict virtue, and will reward it in a future state, takes away the seeming contradiction that otherwise might lie between these two rules of reason, and reconciles them. It is the glory of religion to reconcile these contrarieties. Now let us survey the opposite case:

SECTION V.

THESE CONTRADICTIONS IRRECONCILEABLE WITHOUT AN EXISTENT GOD.

UPON supposition that men spring up into being by fate or chance, and that there is no almighty Creator, or righteous Governor, or Rewarder; then reason would dictate to us self-preservation, or, at least, self-felicitation in the present state, as our supreme obligation, and our supreme rule of action, notwithstanding all our remonstrances of single or social virtue; since there is no hope of any possible compensation in any future state for present acts of self-denial: And thus the strongest obligation would be turned on the side of preserving our present life, or at least our ease or happiness; nature and

* It is not any part of my design here to adjust all the proportional circumstances or oppositions of single and social interests; much less can I say, that the least interest of a society, is preferable to the greatest interest of a single person. All that I think necessary to be said here, is, that upon the supposition of a God, the interest of societies, *cæteris paribus*, is of superior importance to the interest of single persons, and carries in it a stronger obligation. But to adjust every single, possible case, may sometimes afford considerable difficulties, though this general rule stands firm.

inclination, and self-love, would so determine it; and they appear also to have reason, and the fitness of things on their side. Thence it will appear, as to the practice of single or personal virtue, that *Philedon* has not sufficient obligation to tie himself to the rules of it under his violent appetites to sensuality, if there be no God: But self-felicitation would direct and lead him to all manner of indulgence of pleasure, and to finish his own life and being when his pleasures ended. His reason would tell him, that this was the fittest thing he could do; and I might prove it almost mathematically: Thus,

Suppose *Philedon* spent his life according to the rules of virtue, with much fatigue, and watchfulness and self-denial, he might die quickly, and then his being, and all hope of felicity are soon at an end, and that for ever. Or if he dragged on life thus painfully to old age, still, at his death, his being and hope of happiness are for ever gone. And what good hath his virtue done him? But, on the other hand, if he pursue pleasure with daily appetite and relish, and die in a few years time, he hath a much larger quantity of happiness than a short, or a long life of strict virtue, and constant laborious self-denial could give a man of his temper: And after death his felicity would be equal to that of the most virtuous man, that is, non-existence, or eternal unconsciousness and indolence. So that if there be no God, then, upon the strictest reasoning from the fitness of things, *Philedon* would be obliged, by the principles of nature, to make himself happy in his own way.

It will follow also, that under such an atheistical state in the social life, the fitness of paying debts, of keeping contracts, of giving to every one their due, and the unfitness of robbing or murdering our neighbour, and of plundering, or of stealing a piece of bread by a starving man, or a plank of safety by a drowning man; in short, all social virtues among mankind, will be overpowered, and superseded in reason by this superior fitness; that is the rule of self-preservation or self-felicitation. Reason itself dictates this to mankind, since there is no superior authority or law to oblige them to practise these social virtues, and none can reward this self-denying virtue after death.

Perhaps it will be said, that though there be no God; yet, in social life, the good of the many, or of a whole society must be still preferred to the good of single persons; that this is a rule of reason, and ought to regulate the conduct even of a drowning or starving person; otherwise there will be a door open for all manner of plunder and murder amongst men, and virtue will have no farther guard or security. I might safely grant all this terrible inference, *viz.* that murders and robberies will be allowed, and virtue will have no guard: This is, and will be the sad consequence, if there be no God. But I would give some more particular answers:

Answer I. In the first place then, though upon the supposition of an almighty Creator, who is the common Father of all his creatures, the good of a hundred or a thousand of these creatures, is to be preferred to the good of one, and it is his will that it should be so preferred; yet if men come into the world by chance, or by necessary fate, and had no relation to a God, nor any hope of hereafter, every man both would and ought to seek his own life and ultimate felicity, though hundreds or thousands perished. Self and nature, in each single man, have a much stronger, and more pungent sensibility of their own happiness or misery, than they can have of the misery or happiness of ten thousand others: And I think reason would dictate an obedience to this pungent sensibility, this principle of self-love, this natural rule of duty and practice. I answer secondly,

Answer II. In cases which do not reach to life and death, or to such long pain and infelicity which are worse than death, reason may dictate to us to deny our single selves many desirable things for the good of the society: But observe, that is not because the society itself has any sovereign right to this self-denial of ours; but because we ourselves may afterwards want the help of this society: And we shall contradict our own best interest, and our felicity by our practice of rapine or falsehood, if we set the society against us. And therefore reason, perhaps, might dictate such self-denial to us in most of the common cases that would happen in human life, even if there were no God. I say therefore, where our lives or our ultimate happiness are not in danger, the good of the society, of which we ourselves are a part, and in whose welfare we expect our share of felicity, would oblige us by reason to observe the common rules of social virtue.

But in cases which relate to life and ultimate felicity, if there be no God to require of me any self-denying virtue here, nor to reward me hereafter, the superior rule of nature and reason is to save myself, and make myself happy, though ten thousand of my fellow-creatures suffer by it. What obligation can the welfare of the whole society lay upon me to do any thing for them, if I must perish? If I must lose all life, and being, and happiness, for ever, by the practice of social virtue, what is there in reason or nature can oblige me to practise it? Or who is there to reward my self-denying virtue? The secret consolation, or the public glory of a few dying moments, that I have lost my being and my happiness in service to the public, is but a poor and irrational recompence, if there be no God.

Let me add at last; wheresoever there are two different obligations which cross each other, the strongest obligation must be obeyed, and the other ceases. Though there are eternal differences between virtue and vice, and dry abstracted reason may require and seem to oblige us to the practice of virtue; yet since reason and nature, with its piercing sensibilities, join to dictate self-preservation or self-felicitation are we not first obliged to obey these dictates? Is not this obligation strongest? And should not nature and reason, when joined together, break through, or rather surmount and supersede all these abstracted moral notions and differences of vice and virtue, in favour of each man's own sensible happiness? And then I think the least inference we can make is, that man's obligation to these social virtues, especially in such sort of cases, can never be plainly proved and secured by reason, without the supposition of an existent God.

But if there be a God who governs the world, whose will and authority require the practice of virtue, and who will bestow upon those who practise it, an ultimate felicity, then the practice of social virtue is secured by the strongest obligations: And thus the moral obligation, which arises from the reason of things, and the divine or religious obligation, which arises from the will of God, together with the natural obligation, which springs from the pursuit of our own happiness, are all united to secure the practice of every virtue.

SECTION VI.

THE CHIEF DIFFICULTY OF THIS SCHEME OF THOUGHTS REMOVED.

AFTER a careful survey of what I have written on this subject, I can find but one difficulty of any importance attending it. Perhaps some friend may rise up here and object, that the whole stress and weight of my argument against the sufficient "obligation to virtue, arising from the mere fitness of things," rests and turns upon this single point, *the certainty of divine rewards*, which alone can bring over the principle of self-love to the side of virtue. But is it absolutely certain, that God will reward every man's virtue? And if he does not, then it will be said, that according to my argument, even the known will and command of God, though joined with the fitness of things, will lay but an insufficient obligation upon us to practise virtue: For the will of God, which really and in truth should give the highest obligation to the rules of virtue, will be as much superseded and overpowered by this same principle of self-love and self-felicitation, as that which arises from the fitness of things: And thus, if God be not a rewarder of virtue, *Philedon* will be indulged in all manner of pleasant vices still; though the known will of God forbids him.

This objection, as plausible as it appears, I think may be answered these two ways:

Answer I. The will of God in commanding virtue, and the will of God to reward it, ought never to be separated. The equity and goodness of God joined together, incline him to consult the happiness of his creatures, as well as his own honour, in the obligations which he lays upon them to virtue or piety. He has inseparably united our duty and our best interest: And, therefore, though the will of God, made known to man, is a just obligation on man to obey it; yet since God himself hath mingled so intense and supreme a desire of happiness in our composition, he will provide some satisfaction for it in the way of obedience or virtue. Since God has inwrought in our frame such active principles as hope and fear of gaining or losing this happiness, there is abundant reason, from the light of nature, to conclude, *that he did not make all these supreme passions about happiness in vain;* nor to obstruct our virtue, but to encourage and promote it; and consequently that *he will be a rewarder*, as well as a commander of it.

If St. Paul may be cited here, he is of the same mind; Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh unto God*, that is, with a holy resolution to do his will, *must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.* To live a life of obedience to God's will and trust in his goodness, with the faith and hope of divine rewards, this is the general idea of the religion of man both before and since the fall, both natural and revealed; *Do this, and thou shalt live: Repent and your sins shalt be blotted out: Believe* and obey the gospel, *and thou shalt be saved.*

Shall it be said here; but for once let us suppose it, that God may give self-denying and hard commands without any reason to expect a reward; do not these commands carry sufficient reason to oblige a creature to obey? And what if I should answer, no, they do not: You will tell me this is very absurd, that the will of God, which carries the highest obligation, should not sufficiently bind a creature. I answer, first, it is not the highest obligation where all hope of reward is cut off, for the natural duty of self-

felicitation being added to it by the view of a reward, would raise it higher. But, secondly, what if it be an absurd thing, that the will of God commanding does not sufficiently oblige? If you will force upon me absurd and inconsistent suppositions, why should you expect any thing but absurd consequences?

I confess there have been some mystic divines, and some enthusiasts, among the papists, who have screwed up their notions of virtue to such sublimities, that we are bound to practise all the will of God steadily, under the longest and sharpest trials and most self-denying instances, without any regard to rewards or punishments; or even if there were no such things. There have been also some deists who have reproached christianity as a mere selfish and mercenary thing, because of the rewards and punishments it proposes; and have maintained that true virtue should be practised by the sole motive of its own rational excellency and loveliness, that is the fitness of things.*

I deny not the truth of this obligation arising from the mere manifestation of God's will, confirming the reason and fitness of things, even without the hope of reward; but, in my opinion, this obligation alone would not be supreme and effectual: And indeed this seems not to be the religion of men on earth, but of some superior beings, if such there be, who can practise it. Abraham, and Moses, and Paul, and even Christ himself on earth, *had respect to the heavenly country, the recompence of reward, the prize of the high calling, the crown of righteousness*, and *the joy that was set before them:* See the epistles to the Corinthians, to the Philippians, Timothy, and the Hebrews. The language of scripture runs always in this strain; and it seems to be the sense of the bulk of mankind, as well as of Epicurus the philosopher; *if we have hope in this life only*, and there be no rewards after death, *let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;* that is, we have not sufficient obligations to the practice of virtue.

Answer II. Though there were no positive and additional blessedness to be expected as the reward of virtue, to engage the principle of self-love or self-felicitation on its side; yet this is eternally certain, that God, who is the just judge of the whole earth, will not deal with the righteous and the wicked entirely alike: If the righteous be not positively rewarded for their virtue, it is at least certain, the wicked shall be punished for their vices; else virtue and vice would be treated alike, and both would have the same success and event. Now whatsoever advantage virtue has above vice in the remunerative sentence of God, that very advantage, whether it be of impunity and ease, or of positive reward, is sufficient to engage the principle of self-love or self-felicitation on the side of virtue. Thus whether virtue is positively rewarded or no, yet the virtuous

* It is not unworthy of our remark here, that the opposite extremes of error in departing far from the truth, meet again in one and the same gross mistake, *viz.* that "true virtue or piety must have no regard to rewards or punishments." Deism and enthusiasm agree in this point of falsehood, to oppose true christianity and scripture. This error is of the same stamp with the mad paradox of the stoics, that "a wise man is happy in Phalaris's bull," that is, that virtue, in the midst of the extremest tortures and agonies, is still a sufficient reward for itself. Alas! for these unhappy men, these ancient philosophers! they knew not the rewards of virtue and piety, some of which even reason might suggest or expect, if they had known the true God; nor were they acquainted with those superior recompences of faith and holiness which christianity reveals and promises.

Now can I forbear to make this inference here, *viz.* those writers who raise their rules and their test of true piety so high, as to require that we must be content to be damned that God may be glorified in our punishment; they require what God and his word have never required: Nor doth scripture ever demand us to say, we would live in the same perfection of zeal for God, the same mortification of appetite, and persevere in the same strict self-denial and patience, both in duties and in sufferings, if there were no present or future recompences, no heaven and no hell. This is not the sense nor the language of the prophets, or apostles, or of Jesus Christ our Lord, when they would teach us the religion of mankind.

shall be dealt with in a much kinder way than the vicious, by God the governor and judge of the world; and thus the obligation arising from the will of God, as a commander of virtue, will always be joined with such a superior motive from the recompence of God as a governor, that the strongest and supreme obligation of man will still lie on the side of virtue; and this arises only from the supposition of the existence of a God, who as he commands virtue, will in some way or other recompense the the practice of it.

I conclude this point of debate therefore thus:—Without the supposition of the being of a God, I think there is no possible security to innocence, and there will be no sufficient obligation to social virtue and justice among men: But self-love, self-preservation, and self-felicitation will be the supreme law of nature and reason to regulate the actions of every rational and sensible being. And if this supreme law meet with any opposition from the abstracted and speculative notions of the fitness and unfitness of things, and the eternal differences of virtue and vice; yet it will surmount and overturn them all; and each man's own reason will support this supreme dictate of nature, this supreme fitness of things, *viz.* self-preservation or self-felicitation; though it bring with it an universal confusion, mischief and violence in social life. Therefore a kingdom, or a republic of atheists, can never subsist upon any solid principles of nature or reason.

SCTION VII.

THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE REVELATION, BOTH TO CLEAR UP THE RULES OF VIRTUE, AND TO STRENGTHEN THE OBLIGATIONS.

If atheism, with all its pretences to reason, cannot secure our obligations to virtue, but wants the supposition of a God to determine and establish them, it is as manifest, that deism stands in as much need of divine revelation to clear up the rules of virtue with more evidence and certainty than human reason has done, as well as to acquaint the bulk of mankind with them, and to make our obligations to practise them more effectual. It is granted the most general rules of duty, the chief outlines and boundaries of vice and virtue, may be discovered by the reasoning powers of man, if rightly employed; but these discoveries are so few, and some of them are so feebly impressed upon the minds of the multitude, that, in many cases, they leave but a general glimmering light, and give but a doubtful direction: So that man, by nature, in his present corrupted state, is born in the midst of so much darkness, that he hardly knows how to find the rules of his duty in a thousand instances, without some further revelation or assistance.

This has been made abundantly evident by several writers in the defence of christianity. They have shewn how many nations of men as well as schools of philosophers, have grossly mistaken these great outlines and boundaries of vice and virtue. Some have thought fornication lawful, and have practised it even in their worship. Others have encouraged theft, and the community of wives, and exposing or murdering their children. Most princes and generals have esteemed the plunder, robbery and murder of neighbour-nations a piece of heroism and glory. Others again have supposed revenge to be a very honourable practice, and have despised the christian virtues of *meekness*

and *forgiveness*. In the midst of such shameful mistakes of great men and philosophers, and whole nations, can we say, the boundaries of virtue and vice are so plain, that all persons may as easily discern and distinguish them as they may distinguish light from darkness? Or, that the bulk and lower multitude of mankind, who seldom set themselves to study, that plowmen and labourers, can learn their duty sufficiently by the mere light of their own reasonings upon the fitness of things? Again; though some of the great outlines of virtue, and the general rules of it, are obvious to all men, and more might be found out by labour and reasoning; yet, in a thousand particular practices of life, in common occurrences, every man does not know how to apply these general rules to his present circumstances, and he will be often, if not almost always, at a loss in finding his duty in particular occurrences of life.

But God, by the revelation of his will in scripture, has given so bright a discovery of these general boundaries between vice and virtue, and made plain a multitude of these particular duties both by many express commands, and prohibitions, and various parallel examples, both of vice and virtue, that even the common people may learn what they are to believe, and what they are to practise, or avoid, by a far more easy and ready way of instruction. Milk-maids and plowmen, and the meanest offices or capacities in the world may learn their duty here. All the rules of virtue given us by the heathen philosophers, from their supposed fitness of things, fall vastly short of what Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, have done in clearing up the common rules of virtue to mankind, by divine revelation. This is all I shall say concerning the necessity of revelation, to make the rules of virtue plain and evident to the bulk of mankind.

As to the obligations to practise virtue, even upon the supposition of the being of a God, still there is something wanting to render them effectual. This sufficiently appears in the wicked lives of many of the heathen philosophers *who held the truth in unrighteousness*, and sinned against conscience abundantly; and they made it appear how feebly their moral obligations impressed their minds; *for when they knew God, they glorified him not as God;* but practised all the idolatries of the common people, *and gave themselves up to all* immorality, as St. Paul informs us; *Rom.* i. 21—32.

But the great and awful things that are revealed to us in scripture, enforce these obligations of virtue with many additions of strength and efficacy. It is the word of God which sets before us the terrors of the law of God, and his indignation against sinners; it is this gives assurance of pardon of sin upon repentance, and a trust in his mercy through Jesus the Saviour; which tends much to melt our hearts down to repentance, and love, and new obedience. It is this word which tells us, that God takes exact cognizance of all our actions; and that there shall be a great day of judgment, when we shall be called to an account for our behaviour, and rewarded or punished according to our works. It is the word of God which sets before us the certain joys or glories of heaven, and the certain torments and sorrows of hell, where happiness and misery are distributed in perfection, according to vice and virtue. These are the things which awaken all the reasoning and active powers of man; these influence his hopes and fears much more powerfully than the mere light of nature could ever do, and the doctrines of virtue arising from the mere fitness of things. These discoveries of scripture have actually produced more piety and virtue in a town or city of christians than heathenism, or the mere light of reason could ever do in whole nations.

Besides all this, the gospel acquaints us with those divine assistances of the Holy Spirit, which persons who pray earnestly to God for them may expect and receive; whereby vice shall be subdued in their natures, and their irregular appetites and passions shall be mortified; whereby moral and divine things shall be set before them in so powerful a light, as to persuade their wills to become religious and holy. Thus between these clear instructions, these powerful, religious motives, and these divine assistances which the gospel proposes, virtue gains a vast advantage by christianity.

To conclude; though there are eternal fitnesses in things, and reason may find out the general rules of virtue, and the chief boundaries between good and evil; yet a sufficient obligation to practise them cannot be established without the supposition of a God: And even after this supposition we must confess, that the knowledge of these rules amongst the bulk of mankind, will be very dark and dubious in a thousand instances, and obligations to practise virtue will be feeble, and have little effect without the divine revelation of the law and the gospel. Blessed be God for ever for his holy book of scripture! O when shall it be read in every language, and be made known to the ends of the earth!

THE

REDEEMER AND THE SANCTIFIER:

OR

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST,

AND THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT VINDICATED:

WITH

A FREE DEBATE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THOSE DOCTRINES.

REPRESENTED IN A FRIENDLY CONVERSATION

BETWEEN

PERSONS OF DIFFERENT SENTIMENTS.

THE

PREFACE.

THE author of those papers has been often grieved to see such a new sort of christianity published and propagated in the world, as leaves out *the propitiatory sacrifice of our blessed Saviour, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit*, which in his esteem are two of the chief glories of the gospel. He humbly hopes it was a sincere zeal for those momentous truths that set his pen at work, and a just sense of the influence which these truths have upon almost all that piety and virtue which can be called christian.

He leaves it to more learned writers to manage this controversy in a way of strict and regular dispute. He hath chosen this manner of publishing his sentiments, with some hope that they may be better accepted by those who stand in most need of them, and particularly by the polite readers of the age, who seek something to entertain, as well as to instruct and profit. If there are any sudden starts of thought found here out of place, any abrupt sentences or paragraphs without that logical method or exact connexion, which would be expected in a set discourse; let it be remembered that this book is but a sort of *conversation-piece* among a few private friends, who pretend not to theological accuracies.

As to the names introduced in this conversation, they are not designed to represent any particular person living: But if any of my readers should find their own principles and their character described under the sentiments of *Agrippa* or *Cavenor*, the author entreats them to believe that they are the persons for whose sake he took this pains, and he begs the favour of them to read without prejudice or partiality, and with a temper of mind suited to the weight and dignity of the subject, and that they would make scripture their only judge of truth and error in this debate. And may the good Spirit of God render this little discourse useful to put some stop to the growth of these dangerous opinions, to recover those who are fallen into error, and to establish others who are wavering in such important points of the christian faith.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST,

AND THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT.

SECTION I.

THE INTRODUCTION; OR, AGRIPPA'S CREED RECITED AND OPPOSED.

Is there no other way to defend christianity, saith *Paulinus* to his friends, is there no other way to refute the cavils of the deist, but by yielding up the peculiar glories of the gospel? Can it never be vindicated as divine, unless we reduce it almost to the mere dictates of the light of nature, with Jesus Christ set at the head of them only as *a great prophet?* Many a doubter is not gone so far from christianity as to deny the facts on which our holy religion depends; and they will allow that the christian religion in general is supported by these facts, which have been delivered down to us by a notorious and incontestable manner of evidence: But the special and important doctrines of this religion, such as the *sacrifice of Christ as a proper atonement for sin, and our sanctification by the Holy Spirit*, which are taught so frequently and so expressly in the New Testament, carry something in them so disgustful, not only to the relish of our modern infidels in general, but also to the prejudices of some who profess christianity, that they would fain evade these truths, and quit themselves of them by such a construction as really destroys them. *Agrippa* is a christian of this stamp, a gentleman, as I am told, of no considerable estate; but it is said, he makes a shining figure when he appears in company. A few weeks ago I saw a scheme of his gospel, and was informed it is the general sense of many of his acquaintance both in town and country. I have the paper here, and he expresses his creed in the following words:

"When the gentile nations had lost the knowledge of the true God and his worship, and buried it under an immense load of superstitious follies; when they had banished a great part of morality from their minds as well as their practice, the blessed God thought proper to send his own Son from heaven to restore it. When the Jews, who were a people favoured with many divine revelations, had turned their religion into superstition, by resting upon the mere ceremonies of it with the neglect of moral virtues and inward piety, God determined this great reformer should be of their nation. When the whole world of mankind was grown thus horrible degenerate, it pleased God to send this most glorious person Jesus Christ into this world with peculiar commission to restore the religion of nature, the knowledge of the one true God and his spiritual worship, instead of a load of ceremonies, whether human or divine, and to teach the nations true virtue and piety without superstition: He was sent to assure men of the pardon of their sins upon repentance, which indeed they knew before, or their reason might have taught

them, but not quite so clearly, and to tell them that after death men should be called to account for their behaviour in this life, and that a future state of long misery should attend the wicked, and a fair and lasting scene of happiness was provided for those who were virtuous. This indeed, saith he, reason teaches us too, but the gospel superadds the resurrection of the body.

"And further, that this glorious person coming into the world for the reformation of it when it was so dreadfully corrupted, and preaching in opposition to the gross errors and iniquities of the age, it could not be expected that he should escape their rage and malice: Thus he was condemned by the Jews, and crucified by the Romans. This death of Christ on the cross was a noble testimony which he gave as a martyr to the doctrines which he preached; and it is dignified after the jewish and eastern manner with grand expressions in the New Testament, and represented in many sacrificial phrases, of which the Jews were extremely fond, such as *redeeming us by his blood, and making atonement for sin, &c.* because by his death he vindicated and sealed that doctrine, which taught the assured pardon of sin upon repentance, and the recovery of sinners by new obedience to the favour of God and eternal life. Before he left the world he appointed two ceremonies, viz. *baptism and the Lord's Supper!* the first by washing with water to represent to us that we must be washed from our sins, that is, we must repent and be reformed, and live a new life if ever we would be pardoned and saved; and the second by eating bread and drinking wine, to put us in mind that Jesus Christ the Reformer of the world died in vindication of this doctrine of pardon of sin upon repentance, and to confirm the discoveries of this mercy to sinful men. After this he rose again from the dead, gave his twelve chief disciples a little further instruction about propagating this general reformation; then he ascended to heaven, to intercede for men, and to rule over them, and afterwards furnished the apostles with miraculous powers, on purpose to awaken the attention of the world to the rules of virtue and goodness, which they should teach them in the name of Jesus their Master: And therefore we are said, in the New Testament, to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, because the miracles wrought by the gifts of the Spirit roused a stupid world into consideration, and also did something toward the confirmation of those truths which mankind were exhorted to consider in order to their reformation and salvation."

He concludes his paper thus: "Now if any man has any other creed made up of notions and mysteries which goes beyond all this, I affirm that he draws more out of his Bible than God ever put into it; and though I will never be angry with him, says *Agrippa*, for believing more than I, yet I cannot but laugh at him for a strong believer: I dare pronounce boldly he is not just of my religion, nor can I be of his; and if he thinks me but almost a christian, I think him gone as much beyond christianity?"

Paulinus was a gentleman of piety and great zeal for the gospel of Christ. He lived far in the country, and was much retired from the world. Though he held some acquaintance with critics and learned authors, yet he read his Bible with more constancy and application, and learned his religion thence. He was pretty well versed in the writings of St. Paul, but he had heard or known very little of *Agrippa*, or his sentiments, till last March: Then he came to London, which he had not seen for ten or twelve years before, and happened to get a sight of this new creed. As soon as he had read it, he was much surprized and concerned that any man who professed himself a christian should lose so much of his faith; but was much more grieved when he found by

further conversation, that this was the christianity which was now growing in vogue; and upon his repetition of this creed in company, he repeated his concern and zeal.

Must then, said he, the glorious gospel of our blessed Saviour be narrowed and curtailed at this rate, and reduced almost to the mere religion of nature? I acknowledge indeed, and I glory in it, that the gospel which I find in the New Testament contains every article of natural religion, and includes in it every thing that reason can teach us about God or virtue. The man who renounces any one point of the religion of reason so far renounces christianity also; for the doctrine of the blessed Jesus comprehends every part of it, and confirms it for ever. But when the light of nature and reason, in this fallen and degenerate state, had appeared by the long and painful experiments of so many ages and nations, to be ineffectual to reform, to sanctify, and save a vicious world, was not the glorious gospel of Christ brought in to do that for us which the light of reason and nature could not do? Was it not made manifest enough by the jargon and wild opinions of the philosophers that *the world by wisdom knew not God*, nor the right way to recover his favour or his image? And was it not upon this view that God sent his apostles with the message of a crucified Christ, and with that doctrine which *the Greeks called foolishness*, to save the poor and the humble believer? Was not the Son of God sent into this world *to be the Saviour* of sinful men? And was he ordained to save them only by teaching them over again the doctrines which philosophy or reason teaches? No surely: These doctrines were made originally for innocent man, and were found insufficient to restore him after his fall. But Christ was sent, if we will believe the gospel, to do that for us *which the law and light of nature could not do, in that it was weak through our flesh, that is, through our incapacity of fulfilling it:* He was sent down to die and be sacrificed for the sins of men, that is, to ransom or redeem men, who by their sins had deserved death, and to turn their sinful or vicious hearts to the love of God and holiness, by the enlightening and persuasive influences and effectual operations of his Holy Spirit, to lead them not only into the belief and practice of the natural law of God, but also to teach them some new doctrines and duties, such as *faith in the blood of Christ;* Rom. iii. 25. *Seeking justification before God not by any law of works, but by the righteousness or obedience and death of Christ;* Gal. iii. 11—14. Rom. v. 9, 10, 18, 19. *Love and obedience to Christ as our Lord and Saviour;* John xiv. 15. Heb. v. 9. *Praying for the Spirit of God to enlighten, renew, and sanctify us, and to help us in our addresses to God and every duty;* John iii. 5, 6. Luke xi. 1—13. Rom. viii. 26. *Love to our enemies by the example of Christ, and hope of the resurrection of the body and eternal life through his death and rising again, and his everlasting intercession;* Rom. viii. 11, 34. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Heb. vii. 25. These are articles which the light of nature knows nothing of, and which shall certainly issue in the salvation of those who believe and practise them.

Thus spake *Paulinus* in the company of some of his friends. *Cavenor* and *Ferventio* were both present; the former had lately imbibed the opinions of *Agrippa* secretly, but amidst his new doctrines he found some doubtings still, and was solicitous and cautious about his salvation: *Ferventio* was a mortal enemy to these opinions, and maintained the common articles of faith with a warm and vehement zeal. There was another man in company, one *Charistes*, a hearty christian, and a person of known moderation in religious disputes: *Ferventio* had little knowledge of him indeed, but he lived most times in *Paulinus's* house, and was much in esteem with *Cavenor*.

I am sorry, says *Charistes*, that such a sort of new christianity as *Agrippa's* creed should ever prevail among us. Ay, says *Ferventio*, with anger in his looks, it is sad indeed, for our old religion is quite spoiled by it and destroyed. Why should either of you be sorry or angry, answered *Cavenor*, if this should appear to be truth, though it has not been the current sentiment of our fathers? Pray, good *Paulinus*, now you have told us your own belief, tell us what you would say to such a man as *Agrippa*, to make it evident to his reason, that your creed is the true religion taught by Christ and his apostles, and that his is not so? Alas, replied *Paulinus* with a little warmth, what can be said to a man who will not believe his own eyes and ears? A man who hears and reads so many glorious expressions scattered throughout the gospels and epistles, which dictate to him the special and peculiar lessons of christianity, and yet will not receive them? Does not the New Testament speak in most express language, and that very frequently *of the propitiation of Christ for our sins?* Must this blessed doctrine of grace be entirely left out of the last and most perfect edition of a gospel made for sinners, though it was put into all the foregoing editions of it in emblem, and was foretold and prefigured by all former dispensations? Is it not held forth to a guilty world by the sacrifices which attended every dispensation of grace till Christ came? And is not the *Lord's Supper* an appointed memorial of it under the dispensation of Christ? And must *Agrippa* make a new religion for us, by banishing this important article, which has been exhibited and continued in every religion that God has made?

Where is the doctrine of *justification by faith in the name of Christ, or forgiveness through faith in his blood,* to be found in *Agrippa's* creed? Must this be all construed into justification by those good works which the law of nature required us to perform, and which the Son of God came from heaven only to set in a fairer light, and which St. Paul often assures us, can never justify us before God? Must the regeneration, renovation and sanctification of our souls, by the Holy Spirit, signify nothing else than the change of our inclinations from vice to virtue, by our own mere consideration of those truths in which Christ instructs us as a great Restorer of natural religion, and which were confirmed by the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit? Is this all the meaning of those plain expressions, *justified by the blood of Christ and sanctified by the Spirit?* Do we believe the New Testament is from God? Why then do we not believe the articles which this divine book teaches us in such plain and express words? Why do we strain and torture the sacred language to make it speak things so different from its own sense? Is it worth while for our ministers to be at all this pains in the pulpit and the study, by the printing-press and by private conversation, to defend the New Testament from the insults, the cavils and clamours of infidels, if it teaches us so little beyond what the light of nature teaches? Or have we so much to expect, or so much to fear from the deists, that some of us, who are called christians, should be at so much labour to pervert the glorious truths of the New Testament to their taste, and to drop those which they do not like? Have we any good and sufficient reason to subdue the words of Christ and his apostles down to the meaning and sense of infidels, or to be so solicitous to ingratiate those divine doctrines with unbelievers, by reducing them to such a similitude to their opinions, and sinking them almost down to their size and dimensions? Can we ever expect thanks from our blessed Lord in the great day for this sort of service?

For my part, I am fully persuaded, that the books, which have been written in vindication of the atonement of Christ in the two last centuries, carry such abundant force and evidence in them, that they can never be answered. Let *Agrippa* try to refute some of the chief discourses which have been published in former years by protestant divines on this subject: Let him destroy all the arguments used by Dr. Owen, Dr. Bates, and Dr. Edwards in their writings on this theme, and in confutation of the socinian tenets: Let him give an effectual answer to the first part of *Truman's Great Propitiation*, to Bishop Stillingfleet, or Archbishop Tillotson's writings on the sacrifice of Christ, and several others, before he grow to such an assurance of his sentiments. I will not pretend to run over all this controversy again, nor have I any of these authors at hand, being absent from my study. Yet if I were within reach of *Agrippa*, I would put into his hands a few such questions as these, which my own thoughts and my memory suggested to me since I first read his creed: A deep concern for such an important truth hung about my soul, and set my pen at work in these queries.

Pray, *Paulinus*, let us be favoured with the rehearsal of them, says *Cavenor*, in great haste; the rest repeated the same request, and *Paulinus* began to read.

SECTION II.

QUERIES TO PROVE THE DOCTRINES DENIED BY AGRIPPA.

Query I. Does not St. Paul appear to be a man of good sense by all his writings? But surely *Agrippa's* explication of his epistles, supposes him to be one of the most strange, odd, irrational writers that ever used a pen. What, Has the christian religion so little in it beyond the restoration of the religion of nature? and could not Paul teach the restoration of natural religion but in such very improper terms, and such foreign and distant language, as that wherein he represents the gospel of Christ? Is this his plainest and his clearest manner of instructing the heathen world in the religion of nature, or of restoring it where it was lost, to tell them, they must be *recouciled to God by the death or blood of Christ*, that he has *made peace by the blood of his cross*, that *Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God for the salvation of men?* that *he died for our offences*, that he *gave himself a ransom for men*, that *God has set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, that we must *trust in his name*, that we *must be justified by his blood and by faith in him*, that *by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous*, that *by his own blood he obtained eternal redemption for us;* that the *blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, should purge our consciences from dead works*, that is, from works deserving death; and that *Christ appeared in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself?* And do St. Peter and St. John, whom I suppose *Agrippa* acknowledges to be inspired writers, intend nothing more than the same plain doctrines and dictates of natural reason, when they teach the great truths of the gospel in the same strange language, when they tell us that *Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God;* 1 Peter iii. 18. *that he bare our sins in his own body on the tree;* 1 Peter ii. 24. *that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin;* 1 John i. 7. *that he is a propitiation for our sins;* 1 John ii. 2. *that he hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;* Rev. i. 5. and that *by his blood he hath redeemed us to God;* chapter v. 9. And did our blessed Lord

himself design nothing but to restore the religion of nature, when he told the Jews, that *the good Shepherd laid down his life for the sheep;* John x. 11. *that the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many;* Matt. xx. 28. that *they must eat his flesh and drink his blood if they would have eternal life;* John vi. 53—58. for *his flesh was that bread which he gave for the life of the world, and his blood is drink indeed;* that *his body was broken and his blood shed for the remission of their sins;* Matt. xxvi. 28. 1 Cor. xi. 24. Did ever men teach the plain dictates of reason or the law of nature concerning our duty to God and one another, and our hopes of his acceptance, in such dark and distant language? And could they ever desire or expect their hearers should understand them, and should by this preaching be taught to build their hopes of eternal happiness upon the belief and practice of natural religion? Are such persons as these the fittest to make divine messengers of truth and duty to an ignorant world, and to guard them against all superstitious fancies and erroneous conceits about divine things? I suppose, or may guess, there are many things will be said by some of the friends of *Agrippa* to reconcile the readers of the New Testament to his absurd and perverted sense of it. As,

First, That when our Saviour tells the Jews; John vi. 54. that they *must eat his flesh and drink his blood if they would have eternal life*, he only imitates the manner of the oriental nations, and the stile of the jewish writers, while his design is merely to invite them to receive his doctrine and become his disciples; for it was their ancient custom to represent wisdom and knowledge, as the food of the soul; Prov. ix. 5. *Wisdom crieth in the streets, come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Philo* the Jew often speaks of prudence, wisdom and virtue, as that spiritual meat and drink which nourisheth the soul. But to this I answer,

That though the wise men among the Jews represent knowledge as the meat and drink of the soul, and invite their disciples to feed upon wisdom or to drink in their precepts of virtue, yet is it the way of their doctors to represent their own flesh as the meat of souls, or their own blood as proper drink for them! Do they ever say, that *their flesh is living bread, which they give for the life of the world?* Do they ever tell their disciples, that *their flesh is meat indeed, or their blood drink indeed?* Do they pronounce, *if ye eat not my flesh, and drink not my blood, ye have no life in you?* Or do they promise, *he that eateth me shall live by me?* Did you ever read such language among the divine prophets of the Jews? Could it ever be said, except ye eat the flesh of Isaiah, or drink Jeremiah's blood, ye have no life? Were the Jews ever invited to feed upon the flesh of Moses or Elias, the founder or the restorer of their religion, or to drink the blood of Daniel or David. From all this I think I may infer, that though our Saviour's words may include a receiving of his instructions as a divine prophet or teacher, yet in these strong expressions he designs something more than merely an invitation to hear and receive the lessons of wisdom and virtue which he teaches. And since these expressions of our Saviour concerning eating his flesh and drinking his blood, sound very harsh and absurd in the literal sense of them, we must then seek out the plainest and truest figurative sense: Now this is very near at hand, and might be obvious to those among them, who had read the jewish prophets with care. When he tells them that the *living bread is his flesh which he gives for the life of the world;* John vi. 51. it gives an intimation that his flesh or body was to be broken and die as a proper sacrifice of atonement for our guilt, which

deserved death; which was not proper to be spoken too publicly and plainly in his life time: And further, that *his blood was to be shed for the remission of our sins*, and to procure life for us: And that we must not only receive his doctrine, but we must trust in his atonement for our remission, and feed upon this sacrifice by faith, as the Jews eat part of their sacrifices; and that we must live upon it by trusting therein *. And since the Messiah was foretold to be made an offering for sin by the prophets, and since feeding upon sin offerings was common to the jewish religion; *Lev.* vi. 25, 26. the thoughtful hearers might arrive at something of the sense and meaning of our Saviour in this figurative language. But suppose the Jews, when he first spake it, could not well understand him, consider they had abused his person, and derided his doctrine, and having so far rejected the light, they deserved to be left in darkness, amidst figures and parables as Christ himself declares; Mark iv. 11, 12.

I add yet further, there are several things which Christ in his life time spake in prophetic or parabolic language, for this reason, as I hinted before, that they were not fit and proper to be spoken too plainly at that season; but he left the expressions to be explained by the events. The death of Christ, which was not far off, and the ministry of the apostles quickly afterward representing his death *as a propitiation for our sins*, give us a plain clue to lead us into the sense of Christ in these figurative or prophetic speeches, all which are so happily accommodable to these ideas and doctrines of Christ's atonement for sin, and our faith therein, as gives much satisfaction to the thinking reader, that they were designed and intended hereby.

I confess indeed the papists are mistaken, when they imagine this discourse of our Saviour directly regards *the Lord's Supper*, and their idle and absurd doctrine of transubstantiation; yet these speeches of his were greatly explained to his disciples even before his death, when he appointed *bread to be broken* as an emblem of his flesh which was wounded for us, and *wine* which was *poured into the cup* to be an emblem of his blood shed for us, and required us to eat and drink this bread and wine, as representatives of his death, and of our communion and participation of the blessings of it, by faith or dependance on him. All this is natural and easy. But if we sink these expressions into *Agrippa's* sense, of a mere receiving the doctrine of Christ, without any thing of an atoning sacrifice intimated therein, this will make hard figures and

* Objection. Does not our Lord expressly say, *except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, there is no life in you?* But if faith in his blood, or trusting in his atoning sacrifice, was not necessary to salvation in that day, as I suppose will be readily granted, then *eating his flesh* in that day could never signify trusting in his atoning sacrifice. To this I answer, That Christ having promised, *to give his flesh for the life of the world;* verse 57. promised therein to make his flesh a sacrifice *to take away sin* and to give life to the world, and intimated also that when this was done, and when he should be preached to men under this character of a sin-offering, then eating and drinking his flesh and blood, or faith in his sacrifice, would be required in order to spiritual and eternal life. Our Saviour foretelling and describing in figurative language his bloody death, which was to make atonement for sin, foretels and describes also that faith in him which should then be esteemed necessary to salvation, under those figures of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. I grant the expressions are in the present tense, but this is frequent in the prophetic language when future things are designed. But till this event should be accomplished, and this doctrine more plainly preached to men, a general trust in the person of Christ for all the benefits which are to be derived from him, may be represented by eating and drinking, as all that was needful and sufficient to make men spiritually alive: And let it be observed that even this amounts to something more than mere receiving his doctrine, for it is a feeding or living upon him and trusting in his person as an all-sufficient Saviour, and a vital union with him, as our body lives by our food being united to us.

All this answer may be reduced to a shorter compass by explaining the words of Christ thus: "Except ye are made partakers of my atoning sacrifice, or sin-offering, by trusting therein so far as it is evidently revealed and preached to the world, whether in a more or less explicit manner, ye have no spiritual nor eternal life in you."

metaphors indeed, and strain and pervert the words into such a far-fetched and distant meaning, as they are not, nor ever were, suited to convey to any person who reads or hears them. Thus much I thought proper to say in vindication of the expressions of Christ himself. But,

Secondly, perhaps *Agrippa* and his friends will tell us concerning the apostles, as well as concerning their Master, that this sort of sacrificial and atoning language being used by some of the jewish prophets in their inspired raptures, concerning the Messiah, the first preachers of christianity might imitate them; and it is well known they sometimes dealt in very far-fetched metaphors. You read, say they, what Daniel speaks, that *the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself; that he comes to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, and make reconciliation for iniquity;* Dan. ix. 24—26. and Isaiah in chapter liii. 5—10. especially abounds in this sort of prophetical language concerning the Messiah: *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed: His soul was made an offering for sin when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* It is no wonder now, say they, that Christ and his apostles should repeat such language as this, when they speak of the death of the Messiah, since the prophets, by their rapturous and tumid style, had made this sort of language familiar and natural to them.

It is granted, *Agrippa*, that this language was, as it were, made natural and easy to the great Founder and first preachers of christianity, by so much use of them in the prophetical writings: But this does not at all prove that these expressions are not used in their natural sense, but rather confirms the plain and obvious sense of the words, since both the prophets, and their interpreters the apostles, use the same. For suppose the prophets had used such strange phrases as these, in the midst of their raptures, to signify the Messiah's restoring of natural religion, and dying as a martyr for it, could St. Paul and his brethren use no clearer form of speech to instruct us in the true meaning of the prophets, and the business of the Messiah, than by repeating the same sort of sacrificial phrases again and again? And would neither he nor they ever once tell us, that though they use this sort of sacrificial language, they mean no more by it than *Agrippa* does? Were Paul, Peter, and John proper interpreters to be sent into the world, and particularly to the gentile nations, to explain the words of the jewish prophets concerning the Messiah and his great work, if the reformation of natural religion by Jesus Christ be all that the Messiah was to do, and all that the metaphorical prophecies foretold? Why do these apostles use the very same foreign language, and the same dark expressions as the prophets do, if it were their design to explain them so far from their literal and most obvious meaning? Do both prophets and apostles, and Christ himself in the midst of them, all conspire to let in the light of natural religion upon the corrupted and benighted world only by such obscure phrases as these? If they all mean no more by these sacrificial words than *Agrippa* does, would not any plain and impartial reader be tempted to think the New Testament was written to puzzle us as much as to instruct us? And how is it possible that a common reader could ever find out the true meaning of the word of God in such an important point of faith and hope as this? Set all these phrases of atonement before a heathen, and do you think he would learn natural religion by them, or derive *Agrippa's* creed from them? No; by no means.

Or if we should suppose, and it must be granted, that some of the doctrines of chris-

tianity relating to the death of Christ might be delivered in figurative speeches, and dark sentences, at first for wise purposes by Jesus our great Master in his own life-time, before the accomplishment of those events to which the doctrines referred, yet can it be supposed that his missionaries the apostles should never make a clearer explication of them after these events were fulfilled, and tell us that they meant very little more than the religion of nature? Could they not have said this in plainer terms than in the phrases which they have written, and which I have cited? Is it possible that *Agrippa* himself, when he reads the writings of the prophets and apostles without any prejudice, should believe that all these sacrificial phrases of the Old and New Testament, with many more of the like kind, signify nothing but a restoration of natural religion by Jesus Christ, with a martyrdom to vindicate his mission? Can he honestly think they convey no tidings to men of a real and proper *atonement made for our sins* by the sufferings of our blessed Saviour, and of which we are to partake by receiving him according to the gospel? I own I am surprised to think, that any man who professes to submit his belief to the word of God, should refuse so very plain and express a truth.

Are not these the gentlemen who are continually giving us caution to *keep close to scripture, to use the words and expressions of scripture in all matters of revelation, to speak of the doctrines of the gospel as Christ and his apostles speak?* Are not these the persons who are extremely jealous of admitting any thing into christianity, but what Christ and his apostles have taught expressly in the New Testament? Are they not perpetually insisting upon it, that we must take our religion from scripture itself? And do we not effectually obey this their caution and advice, in our belief of the doctrine of *the atonement of Christ* for sin? Is it not most strongly and evidently taught in the New Testament? Is it not taught in many pages, and in great variety of expression there, and that by almost all the writers of that book? Is it not brought in, in the sacred epistles, almost upon every occasion? Are not the great duties of christianity, faith, love, and prayer, built much upon it by the apostles? What shall we say to men who will not observe the very cautions and advices, which they themselves lay down, in forming the articles of their faith? Men who leave out a most plain, express, and important article, and break through all rules of just interpretation, rather than allow of any doctrine in christianity, which doth not suit with their scheme and fancy? If the prophets and apostles never so expressly reveal and dictate such a truth, the words must be tortured and bowed by all the arts of criticism to make them speak and mean something else.

Agrippa has confessed, that it was one great design of the coming of Christ to root out superstition from the minds of men, in all the various fooleries of it which had possessed both Jews and heathens: But if both Christ and his apostles taught them the principles of natural religion by such figurative and sacrificial expressions, was not this the ready way to fill their heads with superstitious fancies, by taking these things in too literal a sense, when their teachers left them to seek the true sense amidst such far distant and hard tropes and figures? Has not this very thing been the cause of many superstitions both in the jewish and gentile nations, by their taking allegories in a literal sense? Did they not both indulge the fancy and vain opinion of obtaining pardon of sin, and favour with God, by substituting their sacrifices in the room of real godliness, and with the neglect of inward religion and true virtue? This was superstition indeed, and such as neither the Old nor the New Testament ever allows. But tell me, *Agrippa*,

could this glorious Reformer of the world, this divine Prophet, and his twelve missionaries, think of no better way to drive men out of all hope and expectations of pardon and acceptance with God, through any such substitutions or sacrifices whatsoever, than by representing Christ so often as a substitute *to die in our stead*, and as *a sacrifice for the sins of men?* If they designed to banish this doctrine from the earth, would they ever have taught men to depend on his death or blood as an atonement for sin, and as the ground of their acceptance with the God of heaven? It is true, Agrippa will say, Christ and his apostles teach us all the duties of morality and virtue, as necessary things to eternal life, and that in very plain language; and that these sacrificial terms are only eastern and jewish ornaments of speech in condescension to the humours of the world, both Jews and gentiles, who could not be all at once beat out of their veneration for sacrifices and atonements?

We allow it, *Agrippa*, thus far, that true virtue and pure religion is taught in plain language by these divine missionaries: But it were far better for them to have left it in that plain language, than to have superadded so many of the sacrificial phrases, if they meant utterly to root all the doctrine of substitutions and atonements out of the minds and hearts of Jews and gentiles. To me it is evident as the sunbeams, that while the New Testament restores natural religion to us in the brightest and fairest light, and lays the strongest obligations on us to perform all the duties of it; yet it still supposes the impossibility of our salvation thereby, through our own incapacity to perform these duties perfectly; and therefore it sets forth to our view the blessed sacrifice of the Son of God, which is *the only true and proper atonement for our sins*. Nor does it set this atonement in the room of our endeavours after inward religion and real virtue, but in the room of all other sacrifices whatsoever, whether jewish or gentile. As for all the jewish offerings, they were but appointed types of the sacrifice of Christ, and could never really atone for the sins of mankind against God as Ruler of the world. And the sacrifices of the gentiles, what were they, but substitutions and offerings of beasts or men upon their altars, such as God never appointed, and therefore would never accept, either as real atonements, or as figures of the true propitiation and atonement. This is the most evident sense of St. Paul, in Rom. viii. 1—3. *There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus*, that is, who trust in him as the medium of their pardon, and *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, that is, who live holy lives: *What the law could not do in that it was weak*, and unable to justify us *through the flesh*, that is, through our inability to perform it, *God* has done this by *sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and a sacrifice for sin, as it is in the Greek, has *condemned sin in the flesh*, &c. and thus made a way through his sacrifice of atonement for our justification and sanctification.

But lest the force and significancy of any of these scriptures should be lost for want of a true idea of what I mean by a *proper and complete atonement made for the sins of men*, I would here give some general explication of what I intend by the word. I do not pretend to such accuracy and exactness of definition, as might be expected from a civilian or a divine; but I would speak what I take to be the common sense of the thinking part of mankind in this matter, and more particularly the sense of the writers of the Old and New Testament. By atonement for sin therefore, I do not mean any such thing as shall in a proper and literal sense appease the wrath of God, the offended Governor, which is supposed to be kindled against his sinful creatures, and shall incline

his heart to mercy, which was before determined upon vengeance; for though this doctrine may be so represented sometimes after the manner of men, yet this is an idea or supposition in many respects inconsistent with the attributes and actions of the blessed God, and with the doctrine of the New Testament. In that book God represents himself as *rich in mercy*, and for this reason he pitied sinful creatures, who had broken his law, and had deserved to die, before he had received any atonement; and therefore God himself provided and sent his own Son to become a sacrifice of atonement, and a ransom for them; he appointed him to be a surety for us, *the just for the unjust*, and to suffer death in the room and stead of sinners.

By the words *atonement* or *propitiation*, I mean therefore some toilsome or painful thing to be done or suffered, or both, by Jesus Christ the Son of God, in the room and stead of sinful men, as a penance or punishment on the account of their sins; and this by the wise and righteous appointment of God the universal Governor, shall excuse the penitent offender from the punishment that was due, and obtain his pardon, because it shall give a recompence to the authority of the divine lawgiver for the affront which was put upon him by the sins of men, and shall make some reparation of honour to his holy law which was broken. And this is not only intended to manifest the evil nature and the desert of sin, together with God's hatred of it; but it shall also answer the demand and design of the threatening by such actual pain or punishment, though it is laid on the surety instead of the offender; and thus it may secure the law from being wilfully broken, in time to come, as effectually as if the offenders themselves had been punished. Such a pain, penance, or punishment, are the humiliation and sufferings of Jesus Christ, his labours and sorrows: And it is in this sense that the language of expiation or atonement, of propitiation and ransom is so often used.* It is in this sense that he was said to become a *sacrifice for us, to bear our sins on his own body on the tree;* 1 Pet. ii. 23. *and to be made sin;* or a sin-offering *for us, who knew no sin himself;* 2 Cor. vi. 21. In this sense he is said *to be made a curse*, and suffer death for us, and to redeem us from it thereby, because the law curses every sinner, and pronounces death upon him; *Gal.* iii. 10. Now by these appointed sufferings of the Son of God, in the room and stead of sinful men, there is an honourable amends made to the Governor of the world for the violation of his law, and a glorious way made for the exercise of mercy in the pardon of the sinner; and that without any imputation of reflection upon the holiness of God's nature and conduct, or any suspicion of the justice of his government, as if he would connive at sin; since he discovers and declares, that in his passing by all the sins of his people in former ages, and in pardoning and justifying sinners now who believe in Christ, he will manifest his justice or righteousness by requiring such a sacrifice whereby sin shall be punished, though the sinner be spared. This is the plain meaning of the apostle; Rom. iii. 24—26. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:*

* Christ, after he became our surety, was not, nor could be delivered from those sorrows which were the punishment of our sins, he being as our expiatory sacrifice, not only on the occasion of our sins, but in our stead, to bear the punishment of our iniquity. Whitby on *Heb.* v. 3.

Which text our fathers have ever thought an unanswerable proof, as well as a clear explication of this doctrine. And I think there is abundant reason in scripture for us to support this sentiment of our fathers, though all the modern writers should agree to oppose it. For my part, as I live at a distance from London, I have conversed with very few of them, and shall still converse with fewer, if they go on to forsake both the language and sense of scripture, and follow the opinions of *Agrippa*.

Here *Ferventio* interrupted him. I acknowledge, Sir, we live in a very degenerate age, wherein ancient errors are revived, and new ones arise among modern writers; but as to the doctrine of the proper atonement of Christ, I hope there are many who maintain and defend it still, both in their volumes of sermons, and other discourses, which are published on this subject. Among others I would point you to a valuable treatise on *Jesus the Mediator*, by a nameless author, who has critically and learnedly established this doctrine against the modern disbelievers of it, and has shewn much of the wisdom of God in this appointment, and of what importance it is to us to believe it. I confess, saith *Ferventio*, the author is suspected not to be very orthodox in some other important points: But this makes it still more remarkable, and gives us more reason to think that it is the doctrine of scripture, when it impresses itself so strongly upon the minds of those men who forsake the doctrines of their catechisms in other respects. I wish, with all my soul, that every man beheld every gospel truth in the same strong light of assurance as I do, and were as fervent and solicitous to vindicate and support it; but in this one article of the atonement of Christ, I think I can venture to recommend this author. Forgive me, *Paulinus*, that I have interrupted you so long, and I entreat you to proceed now in reading your paper.

I obey, says *Paulinus*, and thank you for the interruption. Observe now, says he, though I have not hitherto used the word *satisfaction for sin*, nor will I zealously contend for it, because it is not expressly written in scripture, yet the same sense and meaning is so plainly asserted there, that I make no scruple to use it: And to make the innocency and propriety of this word appear, let us consider the ideas that belong to it. Satisfaction is often made to a private person or a public governor.

Satisfaction is often made to a private person for an injury done him, by doing or suffering something which shall remove his own personal just resentment against the offender, whether this be done or suffered by the offender himself, or by a friend or surety for him: Now in this case the offended person may acknowledge himself satisfied with some very small sort of recompence, according to his own fancy; such as the mere asking pardon, the promising not to offend again, or the payment of a little money, or some small penalty of pain or loss: But this is not properly the case here in the satisfaction which Christ made to God his Father for the sins of men.

The other sort of satisfaction is, when a *public law is broken*, and the governor, though he design to shew mercy to the guilty, yet demands some satisfaction for the offence, something instead of the punishment of the offender, which may equally secure the great ends of government. A wise governor in this case will usually demand such a satisfaction as may best answer the ends of the law, and maintain the authority of the government, such as may shew the wisdom and justice of the lawgiver in making such a law, and appointing such a penalty, and may deter persons for the future from the like offences, even though he design to pardon the present offender. In this case, if a

surety be admitted to stand in the room of a criminal, this is a matter of mere favour; and such a satisfaction is generally required of him as comes nearest to the execution of the penalty threatened by the law, if any circumstances should render it not proper for him to sustain the same in all respects. I know not in history a more happy example of this than the case of Zaleucus, a lawgiver of the Locrensians, who having made a law that an adulterer should lose both his eyes, and finding his own son guilty of that crime, he ordered one of his own eyes to be put out, and one of his son's. "Thus he rendered to the law," says Valerius Maximus, "the punishment which it claimed, with a most admirable temperature of justice, dividing himself into a merciful father, and a just lawgiver." The eye of Zaleucus was here made a partial sacrifice of atonement for the offence of the criminal; this loss of his own eye, together with that of his son, gave such a satisfaction to the government, and as effectually secured future obedience to the law, as if the adulterer had lost both his eyes.*

Such a sort of satisfaction is that which the sufferings and death of Christ have made to God, the Father and Governor of the world, for the sins of men. Death was the threatened penalty for sin; *the wages of sin is death;* Rom. vi. 23. *Tribulation and anguish on every soul that doth amiss;* chapter ii. 9. But God in mercy to the offender hath not only admitted, but also provided a surety, even his own Son; and he hath accepted of his agonies of soul, and his bodily death, in the room and stead of our agonies of soul, and our eternal death, and regards it as a satisfaction for the violation of his law by our sins. He is satisfied as a lawgiver and Governor by this sacrifice, and upon this account it is properly called a satisfaction as well as a sacrifice of atonement or propitiation for sin; so that God now can honourably pardon the sinner without any imputation upon himself, either of his own remissness of government, or of foolish pity to the offender. God having been satisfied with the honour which Christ has done to his law and government by his death. Justice and mercy are tempered here, and both shine with their peculiar glories. It is only through the propitiation of Christ, that God appears to be a just or righteous God, though his mercy justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus, and trusts in this propitiation. See a further vindication of the use of the word *satisfaction* in this controversy, in the treatises of Grotius and of Turretine, and others on that subject, which I have read in my younger years. I have diverted perhaps too far out of the way of argument which I took; but it was needful to give a clear idea of what is meant by *the atonement of Christ*, that the pursuit of my argument in this way of query, might appear more perspicuous, and might move onward with greater force. I have enquired of *Agrippa* already, whether it was possible that St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, by all the various sacrificial phrases which they so often apply to the death of Christ, can be supposed to mean nothing more than a martyrdom for that doctrine of his which excites sinners to repentance by a promise of pardon. I proceed to the next enquiry:

Query II. In the second place I would desire *Agrippa* to tell me, what is the true intent and meaning of this sort of sacrificial language, when it is used by Jews or heathens? And why should not the same language have the same meaning, when it is

* I presume no reader will be so weak as to strain the simile to an exact parallel in all things, and to suppose that men are to make half the satisfaction to the justice of God, and Christ make the other half, because this atonement which *Zaleucus* made was but partial, and did not save both the eyes of his son. The simile is just and proper so far as it goes; but I grant, if *Zaleucus* had lost both his own eyes, it would have been a more perfect parallel.

applied to the death of Christ in the New Testament? What is the sense of such phrases when they are made use of by Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews under God, considered only as their political king, and the civil governor of that nation? What is the meaning of sin-offerings and sacrifices of atonements? What does the jewish lawgiver intend, when the people shall have been guilty of some violation of the statutes of God, as King of the land, or neglect of his ordinances, that they must *slay a lamb or a goat, and burn it upon the altar, that the priest shall make atonement for them hereby, and the offence shall be forgiven them?* And even if *the ruler or any of the common people should commit a sin through ignorance against the commandments of the Lord, they were to lay their hand upon the head of the goat, as a sin-offering*, is not this confessing some iniquity which then came to their knowledge, and transferring it as far as possible upon the head of the animal, and devoting it to death in their stead? The sin-offering was to be slain before the Lord; the priest was ordained to *take the blood thereof with his finger, to put it on the horns of the altar, and to pour out the rest at the altar's foot; the fat was to be burned upon the altar, the priest was to make atonement in this manner for the sin that they had committed, and it shall be forgiven them.* See Lev. iv. 2—35. And in the great day of expiation, when an atoning sacrifice was offered for the whole nation to remove their annual gift, some of the same rites were to be used, the beast was slain and offered to God on the altar, and the blood was carried into the most holy place, and sprinkled before the presence of God, that the blessed God, who dwelt in a visible glory on the mercy-seat, might, as it were, see and accept of the blood or life of other creatures in the room of the life of the offending Jews. See *Lev. chapters* iv. v. vi. and xvi.

Thus it is evident, that the design of these bleeding sacrifices of atonement, was to shew not only that the criminal deserved death in the sight of God, according to strict and severe justice, but that God would shew mercy to the criminal, by sparing him upon his confession of sin, and his repentance, and would accept of the vicarious death of another creature in his stead. This was the plain case and evident design in the first institution of sacrifices given to Adam after his first sin, and it runs through all the offerings of atonement in successive ages.* I must confess, said *Paulinus*, it has been long my settled opinion, that it was God's original and eternal decree and purpose of making his Son Jesus a proper sacrifice of atonement for the sins of men, that gave occasion to all the sacrificial rites of atonement, and the sacrificial phrases which were ever used, and were so well known by the patriarchs, and which were practised by Moses and Aaron, and were established in the jewish nation, and which indeed were conveyed by Noah to his posterity, though they were dismally corrupted in the heathen world.

But to return to jewish sacrifices. Those who will scarce acknowledge these ceremonies to be proper types of the sacrifice of Christ and his blood, yet, I think, they generally allow thus much, that by the appointment of God, these sacrifices were to make a sort of political atonement or satisfaction to God their political Lord or King,

* See this matter set in a good light by an anonymous author in the treatise, entitled, *Revelation examined with Candour*, Part I. page 140, &c. who has promised to shew how the death of Christ was figured in that covenant with Adam, wherein sacrifices were instituted.

as far as they were capable, for breaking any of his statutes, and when this was done, the offenders stood right in his sight as king of the nation, and he did not execute his threatenings upon them. The life of the sacrifice was a ransom for their lives; and *the blood which was the life* or animal soul of the beast, was a ransom for their animal soul, that is, their bodily life.* Now when this same sort of language, in the various phrases of it, is used in the New Testament, and in a most express manner applied to the death of Christ, to the pouring out of his blood, which is called the *blood of sprinkling*, and the real atonement or propitiation which is made thereby in the sight of God, the Lord of conscience, and the Governor of the immortal souls or spirits of men, why should not we suppose that the words bear the same sense? Why are we not to understand by these expressions, that *Christ made his soul an offering for sin*, that Jesus Christ by his death became a true sacrifice of propitiation for sinful men, by dying in the room and stead of the offenders, and obtained the pardon of those sins, those real immoralities or impieties, *from which they could never be justified*, or released, *by the law of Moses;* Acts xiii. 39. and for which there was no sacrifice appointed by that lawgiver? What, Must the *blood of bulls and goats make a real atonement for the sins of the jewish nation*, that is, their political offences or ceremonial defilements in the sight of God, as their peculiar King and Governor, so as to restore them to temporal blessings; and shall the blood of Christ be construed to make only a typical and figurative atonement for the sins of men, which deserve eternal death, in the sight of God, the universal Ruler of all nations, and the Lord of conscience? If any of these be typical and shadowy, good *Agrippa*, let the blood of bulls and goats be the type and shadow, as St. Paul, in the ninth chapter to the Hebrews, declares, and not the blood of the Son of God; nor let the expressions that relate to it be explained all away, and be made to vanish into type, and trope, and metaphor, when they are applied to the substance and antitype. The ninth and tenth chapters to the Hebrews, I think, might sufficiently convince any willing and unprejudiced reader, how much the apostle had his eye and heart fixed upon this doctrine of the real propitiation made by the blood of Christ, as typified by the jewish sacrifices and propitiations: And when these are said to *sanctify to the purifying of the flesh*, that is, to remove bodily or outward impurities, so as to set the offender right in the sight of God as King of the nation, or visible head of the church, dwelling in the holy of holies on the mercy-seat, *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works*, that is, remove the guilt of those works from the conscience which deserved death? *Heb.* ix. 13, 14.

I would enquire further, what is the meaning of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, when in *John* i. 29. he says, upon his sight of Jesus, *Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world?* Does he call him a Lamb, because he takes away sin by his doctrine of pardon upon repentance, and by his death confirms this doctrine? Did lambs ever take away sin in this manner, by doctrine and martyrdom? Is there any sense in which a lamb takes away sin, but as an atoning sacrifice by his

* Some have objected here, that the beasts which were brought to the priest for sacrifices, were mere mulcts or fines imposed on the offender. But I answer, What need was there then that the beast should immediately *be killed before the Lord? What need of the hand of the offender to be laid on the head of the sacrifice, that it might be accepted as an atonement for him?* Lev. i. 4, 5. If the beast were not to die in the offender's stead, why is it said, *without shedding of blood there is no remission?* Heb. ix. 22. A fine doth not require blood.

bloody death? And how can this be applied to Christ in this place, in any other sense? And this is plainly expressed by the apostles John and Peter: If we consult Peter, 1 *Peter* i. 18, 19. he says, "Ye were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish." And John tells us in *Rev.* v. 8, 9. "The elders fell down before the Lamb, and said, thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

But I would pursue this second query a little further still. What is the true meaning of this sort of expressions, when God himself uses them to Eliphaz, and the other friends of Job, who had nothing to do with judaism, and probably were born before Moses? "Take seven bullocks and seven rams,—and offer up for yourselves, said he, a burnt-offering, for my wrath is kindled against you; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly." Here is an atonement plainly enjoined, that God might honourably pardon them.

What does Balak the king of Moab mean by his question put to Balaam, as it is recorded by Micah the prophet, *chapter* v. 6, 7. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, or the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Does not this language plainly signify an atonement for sin? Though Balaam by the prescription of moral duties shews him, that all these expensive and bloody sacrifices are not sufficient to please God without holiness.* It is plain therefore, that others, besides Jews, use this language in the same sense.

* Since I have mentioned this text to shew the sense and meaning of Balak in his enquiries, it is necessary I should more at large explain Balaam's answer, because the men of *Agrippa's* creed boast of this text as a proof of their doctrine, *viz.* that all sacrifices are useless things toward any real atonement for sin: For when Balak puts the question, say they, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, or the sacrifice of my own Son?" Balaam refers him only to the practice of natural religion: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God;" without so much as any positive approbation of sacrifices? And, say they, this very answer of Balaam, the heathen, is cited by Micah, a prophet of the Jews, as an instruction for them how to please God, that is, by moral duties, and not by sacrifices. Now to give a fair answer to this matter, let it be considered,

First, Balak was the king of Moab, and imagined God was to be engaged on his side by sacrifices: Therefore in several places "he built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on every altar, that he might prevail with God to give him victory over Israel;" *Num.* xxiii. When he found all this was vain labour, he may then be supposed to enquire of Balaam, "wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" Are not my sacrifices young enough? Must they be calves of a year old? Are they not large enough? Shall I bring a thousand rams instead of seven, or rivers of oil instead of a small quantity? Or are they not precious enough? Shall I offer my own children instead of brute beasts? Whereupon Balaam seems to say, Alas, you are quite mistaken: It is not for want of younger or larger sacrifices, or of any other kind, that God neglects you: If you would become acceptable to him, you must mind the duties of morality and piety, "do justice, love mercy, and humble thyself as the original words are, to walk with thy God." So that sacrifices are neither encouraged nor forbidden in this speech of Balaam: but Balak is pointed to that morality and inward religion which he wanted, and without which no sacrifices whatsoever could be acceptable to God.

Secondly, Consider that Balaam was a heathen, who was sometimes inspired, but not always. Now if these words as spoken by Balaam were not inspired, then it is only Micah the jewish prophet's citation from a heathen, to put the Jews in mind how much more acceptable the duties of morality are to God than mere ceremonies. The Jews were much of Balak's mind, and thought ceremonies and sacrifices should do all for them, while they neglected moral duties. Balaam is silent about sacrifices, and directs Balak only to piety and morality; and Micah, for the same reason, cites the same sentence to the Jews, that while he reproves them by the mouth of a heathen, he may shame them into virtue and piety. Probably Balaam, among the rest of the heathens, had lost the original institution and design of sacrifices, and the light of nature could not teach it him again: And therefore he makes no answer about them, nor saith any thing of them; but the light of nature could teach him, that to do justly, &c. was necessary to please God. But on the other hand, suppose Balaam was inspired to deliver this sentence to Balak; and suppose, while he preaches morality, he had gone so far as to have strongly denied the use of sacrifices here, it can mean only a comparative denial, that is a preference of morality when compared with ceremonies; for comparisons are expressed often in this manner in the

Yet again let me ask, what is meant by all the phrases of the like kind, when they are used by the ancient heathens, as we read in their own writings, when either beasts or men were devoted to death, in order to save a guilty person or a nation from punishment, and the supposed anger of their gods? What can be the meaning of these phrases when they are used upon this occasion, "Averruncare malum," or, "deorum iras lustrare, populum aut exercitum, piaculum fieri," or περίψημα, ἀνάθεμα ἀποκάθαρμα expiare crimina, scelus, reatum;" I say, what does all this mean, but to make atonement for sin, to remove the punishment from the offenders, by letting it fall on the surety or sacrifice? So the two Decii, father and son, devoted themselves to death, and saved the Roman army from the supposed anger of the gods and destruction. So Menœceus is said to have devoted himself for the city of Thebes, in danger of being destroyed by the Argives. So the Massilians were wont to expiate their city, by taking a person devoted, by imprecating on his head all the evil to which the city was liable, and casting him into the sea, with these words, περίψημα ἡμῶν γένε "Be thou our propitiatory sacrifice." So the Egyptians, as Herodotus testifies, laid their imprecations on the heads of those that were devoted to death, that all evil might be turned from the sacrificer, and from Egypt, and laid on the head of the sacrifice. See many citations and instances of this kind in learned writers. Consult Grotius's little book "of the satisfaction of Christ," and let *Agrippa* answer those arguments better than any of the socinians have done before he renounce this doctrine. Consult another very short essay on this subject by the late learned Doctor Owen, at the end of his Treatise of the Trinity, where, as I remember, he shews the true meaning of "one person's dying for another" among the ancient heathens, and the doctrine of atonement for sin as practised among them, which may be easily reviewed without running to more large and learned volumes.* Now when this is the plain meaning of atonement for sin, or purging away sin by sacrifice, so well known among the Jews, and amongst the heathens, that is, through all the world; I would ask *Agrippa* why should not the same sort of expressions be permitted to signify much the same thing, when they are made use of in the New Testament, and applied to the sufferings and death of Christ, as an atonement for the sins of men?

Were not the apostles sent to preach the gospel to the gentiles as well as the Jews? and if it could be supposed that they used these expressions of atonement only in con-

eastern languages, by a negation of one thing, and an affirmation of the other, as is abundantly evident in this very case; *Hos.* vi. 6. "I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings."

Thirdly, Consider yet further, that when the prophet Isaiah reproves the Jews for want of moral virtue, he speaks more expressly against sacrifices than Balaam does here. He tells them, their "oblations were vain, their new moons and appointed feasts were an abomination; *Isaiah* i. 11—15, &c. not that God had not appointed them, but because they were not attended with moral virtues: And upon this account he says, "Bring no more vain oblations: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" Yet all this language of the prophet does not prove that sacrifices were utterly useless under that economy wherein they were prescribed; for at another time the very same prophet, as well as others, reproves the Jews for the neglect of the sacrifices and offerings which God had appointed; *Isaiah* xliii. 23. *Mal.* iii. 8. Such kind of language therefore, whether used by a jewish or a gentile prophet, only shews that a dependence on sacrifice without real virtue or piety, is worth nothing in God's account.

* It will be granted that the heathens speaking of their sacrifices and atonements for sin, use some such expressions, as "appeasing the wrath of their gods, by the blood of their sacrifices," &c. which cannot properly be applied to the sacrifice of Christ in their literal sense; because in propriety of speech, God has no wrath awakened in him by sin, nor can any blood properly appease that wrath. But let it be remembered, that the great God condescending to the weakness of men, sometimes speaks in their phrases, and hath been pleased to represent himself as angry on the account of sin, and as appeased by the sacrifices of atonement in several places of scripture, though the true and proper ideas of these things are evident and obvious enough, as they have been explained before.

formity to jewish customs and phrases, why did they use them so much among the gentiles? Did they not design to preach in such language that the gentiles might understand their meaning? But if these phrases were well known among the heathens as well as the Jews, then why should we not suppose these expressions, when applied to the death of Christ, to be understood in the common sense of mankind, both Jews and gentiles?

To confirm all this, let me enquire here, what was the sense in which the primitive christians understood these expressions of Christ and his apostles? How do they describe and set forth their conceptions of these great and momentous doctrines in their writings? Do they not speak plainly and strongly of the atonement of Christ for sin, and his dying as a sacrifice to expiate their offences, and their interest in this forgiveness by faith? Now if primitive writers inform us this was the common sense in which the first christians understood the speeches of Christ and his apostles, why should we not imagine that they took them in the right sense? Why should the church be supposed to wait so many hundred years for the true meaning of the christian doctrine till the days of Socinus? Why was it left to wander so long in such strange superstition and mysterious darkness, as the doctrine of "atonement for sin by the death of Christ," if these speeches meant nothing else but natural religion, or the confirmation of it by the martyrdom of a prophet? In doctrines and expositions of lesser moment I easily suppose many of the fathers may greatly mistake, but methinks in doctrines of such vast importance, Christ would not suffer all his early churches to be mistaken.

Query III. Again, I would ask *Agrippa*, was not Socrates raised up by divine providence to instruct a corrupt nation, and to reform a degenerate age, as he supposes Jesus Christ to be? Did he not teach the "unity of the true God," and the true way of worshipping him by inward devotion of the heart, in the midst of many Grecian idolatries and superstitions, as Jesus taught the spiritual nature of God and inward religion, in opposition to the traditions of Jews, and mere outward ceremonies? Was not Socrates accused for speaking against the idols of Athens, and the public religion, as Jesus was for his reproving the corrupt manners of the Jews? Was he not condemned by wicked men, and put to death by poison on this account, as Christ was by the cross? Did he not bear his testimony to the truth of his doctrine, and seal it with his death as Jesus did? Do not the deists cry him up as a martyr for the "unity of the true God," and the "rules of virtue," as our modern christians make Christ a mere martyr for his doctrine of reformation? And had he not several disciples who taught his doctrine concerning the unity of God and the divine perfections? And do they not declare the true sentiments of Socrates, their master, as the apostles declare the true doctrines of Christ? But does Socrates himself, or any of his disciples ever talk in such a manner about his death and the cup of poison, as Christ and his apostles do about the crucifixion of the blessed Jesus? Do the Greek philosophers lay out such strange language upon it, and such various and hard tropes and figures to represent the great importance of his death to their practice of virtue, or the obtaining the divine favour? Does he ever say for himself, or did they ever say for him, "unless ye eat the flesh of Socrates, ye cannot be philosophers," or that "Socrates gave his flesh for meat to the people, and for the life of the world, or gave himself a ransom for many?" Did Plato ever teach his pupils that "they must be saved by the death of Socrates," or that "he reconciled them to God by his dying for them?" Do they ever "glory in the poison of Socrates, as St.

Paul glories in the cross of Christ?" When they taught the doctrines of Socrates concerning God, religion, and virtue, do they ever say, "we preach Socrates poisoned," as the apostles preached "Christ crucified," though Socrates died by poison, attesting the truth of his doctrine, as Christ died by the cross to attest his? Can it be supposed then that our Saviour's death held only the same place in his doctrine as the death of Socrates held in his, that is, as an attestation to the truth of it, or sealing it with his blood? Can we persuade ourselves, that when "St. Paul determined to know nothing else amongst the Corinthians in comparison of Christ and him crucified," that he meant merely the martyrdom of Christ to attest the truths of natural religion, of which he was the restorer? Surely the death of Christ upon the cross has something more to do in this our gospel, than the death of Socrates had in his philosophy; it has more to do than merely to bear witness to the truth of his doctrine, and to convince the world that he was sent to publish it; since his crucifixion and death, according to St. Paul's writing, lies as the foundation of the gospel, that is, of the blessed tidings of peace and reconciliation to God, and the recovery of sinful men to holiness and happiness.

The gospel is so much concerned in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, that it is represented by the apostle, as a considerable and very important part of the message or "word of reconciliation committed to him;" 2 *Cor.* v. 19, 21. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them,—for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Query IV. I would yet further ask *Agrippa*, why St. Paul should frequently represent the gospel as a great mystery,* a deep and sacred thing which the world knew not, nor could know till it was revealed? A mystery which was hid from ages and generations, which was hid in God from all the ancient ages, or from the beginning of the world, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the manifold wisdom which is made known by the church to the principalities and powers of heaven, or of which the angels themselves desire to pry into, as St. Peter speaks, and which is made known to the nations by preaching the mystery of faith, the great mystery of godliness? Is there any such depth of divine wisdom manifested in the common truths of natural religion? Is there any such hidden mystery in the doctrines which the light of nature teaches, as that the former ages of the world could not possibly find it out, and which angels are forced to pry into, in order to learn it? Is there any thing that deserves such language in the dictates of reason, even if you should add the happy resurrection of the body to them, which is discovered by Christ as the reward of his faithful followers? But that the Son of God, who "dwelt in the bosom of the Father before the world was, who was with God, and who was God, should take flesh and blood upon him," that he might be capable of dying, and that he should actually die in the room and stead of guilty men as a sacrifice of atonement, that he should reconcile them to God by his death, that he should rise again, and reign in heaven to complete this salvation, and that sinful men must obtain pardon of sin and eternal life, by the sufferings and death of the Son of

* It is known Mr. Locke has taught some persons to imagine, that in almost, if not entirely all the places where the word "mystery" is applied to the gospel, it relates chiefly or only to the preaching of it to the gentiles as well as to the Jews, and the admission of the gentiles into the kingdom of the Messiah. I grant it may include this in two or three places; but it is sufficiently evident, that in several other scriptures it refers to the doctrines of the gospel itself, without any necessary reference to the reception of it by the gentile world: But that is not my present business.

God as a sacrifice in their stead, and by faith in his blood; this is such a doctrine unknown to the world, such a divine mystery as deserves all these expressions of wisdom and honour which the apostle applies to it. Though the heathens as well as the Jews might easily understand this doctrine when it was preached unto them, according to the notion of expiation by sacrifices, which was familiar to them, yet it was originally a mystery which they could not have known without express revelation, and they were averse to receive it when it was revealed.

Query V. I will make another query, and ask *Agrippa* and his friends again, why St. Paul speaks of the gospel of Christ as such a matter of folly and ridicule in the esteem of the wise men of this world, or the heathen philosophers, if it were little more than the doctrine of the light of nature, the rules of virtue, and the favour of God to those who followed them with a repentance of their former vices? Why should he call this gospel "the foolishness of preaching, by which it pleased God to save them that believe?" Why should he speak of his venturing to preach it as a matter of courage sufficient to boast of, and that several times over; that "he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ;" that "he is not ashamed to preach it even at Rome," and that he should call "the cross of Christ his glory;" *Rom.* i. 16. and 2 *Tim.* i. 12. and *Gal.* vi. 14, bearing up boldly through all the reproach and shame that was ca upon his doctrine by the men of wisdom and philosophy? If the mere restoration of natural religion was the grand subject, or chief theme of his ministry, would the heathen philosophers have ever pronounced foolishness upon it; or have put him to shame for such sort of doctrines as their own reason might teach them, and several of them did teach? It is evident therefore, that the name of Christ crucified, in the apostle's lips, includes in it the reconciliation of sinful man to God, by the sufferings of the cursed death of the cross which Jesus endured, and which is laid at the foundation of his religion. This is that which some of the philosophers of Greece would deride and call foolishness, *viz.* for one person to hope for pardon of sin and eternal life by the sufferings and death of another; and this is the doctrine of which St. Paul is not ashamed, but makes it the matter of his sermons and his glory.

Query VI. Might I be permitted to proceed in this sort of interrogative manner, I would enquire of *Agrippa* and his companions, whether a much meaner person than they themselves believe Jesus Christ to be, might not have been sufficient to be sent from God as a prophet, to restore natural religion, and teach the world all the doctrines which Christ taught them? I suppose they believe him, according to scripture, to be the only-begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father before the foundation of the world, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, by whom and for whom all things were created in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, who is Lord of angels, and to whom all the principalities and powers of the upper world are made subject, and are but his ministering spirits. Now was it worth while for so illustrious a being, who is so near to god-head even in their sense, to be sent down on this earth to spend a life in labour and sorrows, to be scourged and buffeted, and nailed to a cross, and expire there in the midst of shame and agonies, if his chief business had been to restore natural religion as a great Prophet or Teacher, and to die in the confirmation of it? Might not Isaiah or Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets have been raised to life for such a purpose as this, rather than the only Son

of God sent down to die so cruel a death? Might not some new prophet have been raised up amongst men, and been furnished with the power of miracles like Moses, to have attested all the truths that Jesus preached to the world, and then died as a martyr for them, and rose again to give them confirmation? What doctrine did our blessed Saviour ever pronounce, which the tongue of a much inferior person could not have pronounced? What visible miracle did he work, which a Moses or an Elijah could not have wrought by commission from heaven? Is the choice of so divine a messenger for such purposes of a mere prophet, as might have been fulfilled by much meaner persons, agreeable to the conduct of supreme wisdom? Or had the great God so little value for the peace and happiness of his best beloved Son, as to make him a needless sacrifice? Surely if we believe the history of the gospel, and the language in which it is expressed, our own reason would teach us also to believe, that so glorious a person as Jesus Christ, was sent down and died for some such grand and important design as the mission and death of a meaner person could never effect, that is, as the apostle Paul expresses it, "to purge away our sins by the sacrifice of himself;" *Heb.* ix. 26. or as Jesus himself informs us, "to give his life a ransom for sinful men;" *Matt.* xx. 28.

And it is well worthy of our notice, that in several places of the New Testament, where the death of Christ and our redemption by it are mentioned, there the dignity and sublime character of our Saviour is at the same time represented, to shew us how great a person this was who must die for our salvation, as in the text now cited; *Heb.* i. 2, 3. "The Son of God who is appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the world, who is the brightness of his glory, and his express image;" and it is this glorious person who "purged away our sins by himself, that is, by offering himself a sacrifice;" as *Heb. chapters* ix. and x. So *Col.* i. 14—16. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, for by him were all things created, visible and invisible;" *Heb.* ix. 13, 14. "If the blood of bulls and goats purified the flesh, &c. how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works?" And in several other places. Do not all these representations of the matter teach us, that the death of a meaner person than the Son of God was not sufficient to attain these ends, and consequently that so very glorious a person was sent down from heaven to live and die on earth for such purposes as an inferior person's life and death could never have attained.

And as a much meaner person than the Son of God, *viz.* a prophet or an apostle, might have been sent from heaven to teach all the doctrines which Christ taught, and to become a martyr for them; so in fact the apostles and a thousand martyrs in the primitive times did teach the same doctrines, did bear witness to the same truths, and did actually die in confirmation of them: They suffered deaths full of barbarity and anguish in vidication of the same gospel, they sealed the same covenant of grace with their blood: And yet it is never said concerning any of them, that they "redeemed us with their blood," that "they were made a curse for us, or a sin offering to reconcile us to God:" They are never said "to make atonement for our sins," nor "to give their lives as a ransom for us:" They never are represented as "bearing our sins on their own body on the tree," though several of them were crucified as well as Christ; nor are we ever said to "be washed from our sins in their blood." These are expressions far above the dignity of their sufferings, and such as belong only to the blessed Jesus: It would

be a sort of blasphemy against the Son of God to speak thus concerning the apostles and martyrs. And yet why might not these expressions be as well applied to the apostles and the primitive martyrs, especially such as were inspired of God to teach the same doctrines, and appointed to die in vindication of them, if their sufferings were designed for the same purpose, and meant the same thing as the sufferings of the Son of God? At this rate we might have a hundred Saviours and Redeemers, a hundred sacrifices for sin, and we might wash away our iniquities in the blood of a hundred martyrs. Whereas, alas! the highest and best of them who "stand before the throne of God in white garments;" *Rev.* vii. 14. they all, "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," though they themselves came out of great tribulations, laid down their own lives as witnesses to the same gospel, and set the seal of their blood to the truth of the same promises. Surely the blessed Jesus, our only Redeemer, died to accomplish more sublime purposes than ever they could pretend to; he laid down his life to procure and obtain that pardon and that salvation both for them and for us, which no meaner person could ever obtain by a thousand lives, or the blood of ten thousand martyrdoms.

Perhaps *Agrippa* will tell me, that Christ himself expressly assures Pilate; *John* xviii. 37. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth;" and therefore it is evident from his own words that his prophetic office was the very design of his incarnation. But I hope *Agrippa* will allow this answer, *viz.* that Christ came into the world for several ends, of which this was but one, "to bear witness to the truth:" And he himself as expressly tells his disciples, that there is another end also for which he came, and it would have been to very little purpose to have told Pilate of that, *Matt.* xx. 28. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many; and *John* x. 10. "I am come that the sheep might have life; and in *verse* 11. he informs us by what means he procures this life for his sheep, *viz.* "I am the good Shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep;" and *verse* 18. who "received commandment from the Father to lay down his life and take it again." St. Paul teaches the Jews the same doctrine, and assigns the same end for Christ's incarnation; *Heb.* ii. 14. "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, Christ himself took part of the same, that through his own death he might destroy the devil and his works; in *Heb.* x. 5—10. because the jewish sacrifices and offerings of beasts could not take away sin, "Christ had a body prepared for him, that through the offering of this body of Jesus once for all, we might be perfected by his own sacrifice." And Peter assures us; 1 *Pet.* i. 19, 20. that "we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who was fore-ordained from the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times." Thus it appears that the great end for which Christ came, was to obtain pardon of sin by dying for us.

Let me add to this, that not only in the decree of God, but in the very first promise given to man after his fall, Christ is represented as one appointed to suffer; *Gen.* iii. 15. The "serpent was to bruise his heel." In the first and most significant figures of him by sacrifices, his death and blood were prefigured; In the various promises of the Messiah, especially by Isaiah and Daniel, he is held forth as a Saviour from sin, by his being cut off, by his suffering and dying and being made a sin-offering. Are not all these things sufficient to teach *Agrippa*, that our blessed Lord was not merely put to death

by the occasional rage of the wicked Jews against him as a teacher of holiness, and a reformer of mankind, as he supposes, but that he was originally designed and appointed to die a sacrifice for sin? It is plain, that he was early foretold and prefigured in the promises and types and prophecies under this character of a suffering Saviour, that he came into our world for this end, and that he was at last delivered, or given up into the hands of his crucifiers, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, for this purpose:" *Acts* ii. 23. And as such he is described and preached by himself and his apostles.

Paulinus was going on with his queries, when one in the company, I think it was *Cavenor*, interrupted him thus: I have lately heard, Sir, that some of the friends and followers of *Agrippa* have been made sensible, that "a mere martyrdom to bear witness to the truth of the gospel," is not sufficient to answer the purpose designed by the blood of Christ, according to scripture; and therefore they have found out a new way to explain the phrases of "making atonement for sin, and dying as a sacrifice for our sins;" they suppose them to reach a little further, and to signify to us, that as the wages or punishment of sin is death, so the death of Christ, was designed to shew us what sin deserved, and by this means to discover to us the great evil of sin, and to excite us thereby to repentance and a life of holiness, and that it is chiefly in this manner that we are said to "be saved by the death of Christ, or salvation is ascribed to his blood."

I grant, says *Paulinus*, this is something nearer to the purpose than the former opinion of "mere bearing witness to his gospel as a martyr;" But still it falls far short of the grand expressions and the plain assertions of scripture, concerning the sacrifice of Christ: And though the death of Christ as an atonement must needs include this as one design of it, *viz.* "to shew what our sins deserved," yet this cannot be the whole doctrine which is meant by the sacred writers, when they teach us expressly the other end and design of sacrifices, *viz.* "suffering in the room and stead of the sinner" in a much stronger manner, and apply it to the death of Christ, saying, that "he died for our sins," that he, "gave himself a ransom for sinners, that we are reconciled to God by his death, that he made peace by the blood of his cross, that he redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us, that he bare our sins in his body on the tree, &c." all to shew that though the justice of God required death for sin, yet the mercy of God accepted of a surety to die in the stead of the principal offenders. Why must this more important design of sacrifice be only expressed, if the other, which is far less, were the only thing that was meant? Would not this lead almost every common reader into a gross mistake about the design of the death of Christ?

I would enquire earnestly of the friends of *Agrippa*, if the ideas of the holy apostles and of Christ himself went no further in all their sacrificial expressions concerning Christ, than to teach us what sin deserved, why do they not speak these ideas in proper language, more plainly, directly, and expressly? Why should such phrases be so frequently used, as "making atonement for sin, reconciling us to God by his death, and taking away our sins by his sacrifice," if the scripture meant no more than to shew us what sin deserves? Is it not strange that neither Christ nor his apostles should ever once use that expression among all their speeches or writings, or ever once tell us that the death of Christ was confined to this design, if it really designed nothing more? Besides, did not all the bloody sacrifices which were offered under the law, which are

said *to make atonement for sin*, discover that sin deserved death? And what did the death of Christ do more than they?

When man had sinned at first, did not God appoint sacrifices to be slain in the room of the sinner, not only to shew what sin deserved, but thereupon he granted the sinner a visible continuance in life, to shew that his guilt was transferred to the animal which was sacrificed? Had not all the whole train of expiatory sacrifices from Adam down to Christ, this same signification? And yet we are told, Heb. x. 4. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should really take away sin*, that is, remove the guilt of our sins from before God, who is Judge and Lord of conscience. What did they do then? Why, they did that typically and in a way of emblem, which the blood of the Son of God was to do really and effectually. It is very plain, that the sacrifice of Christ was to effect that which all the Mosaical sacrifices could not do: It was to remove from men such moral guilt as the jewish sacrifices could not remove, and justify us from that guilt, from *which the law of Moses could not justify us;* Acts xiii. 39. The jewish sacrifices themselves did not only shew the desert of sin, but, as I have said before, did make a real and proper atonement for civil or ceremonial faults and defilements in the sight of God as their political Lord and the king of the nation, and freed the sinner from civil punishment; and they did also make a typical atonement for the moral guilt of the offender before God, as the Lord and judge of souls and consciences, that is, they were the types of such an atonement. And though these types were not much understood by the Jews of old, yet they were to be accomplished and fulfilled by the bloody sacrifice of the Son of God, or his offering up his own life in the room of sinners; and it is by this bloody sacrifice of our Saviour, that the moral guilt of sin is really removed from the souls and consciences of true christians, as the ceremonial defilements or political guilt of an Israelite was taken away by the blood of bulls and goats. All these meaner sacrifices would be sufficient to shew that sin deserved death; but it requires such a dignity of person as was found only with the Son of God, to take away our sins, that is, *to make a real atonement for the moral guilt of the souls of men*, of which all the former were but shadows and figures.

Before *Paulinus* had proceeded further with his several queries to *Agrippa*, *Ferventio* stopped him with this speech: *Sir, there is another erroneous sense put upon the strong and plain expressions of scripture, concerning Christ's making an atonement or propitiation for sin by his sufferings and death:* Dr. Whitby calls it a *socinian gloss* in his annotations on 1 Pet. ii. 25. and represents it in these words; they say *Christ took away our sins by his own body crucified upon the cross, procuring our absolution from them by his sufferings; not that he underwent the punishment of our transgressions, but because his voluntary death prevailed with God to give him power to absolve his servants at the last, and to reward them with eternal glory.* And I am told, saith *Ferventio*, this opinion grows much in vogue in our days, both in preaching, in writing and conversation; and some people are not ashamed to pronounce and defend it as the truest and justest sense of these scriptural phrases, though they have not yet found out one single text in all the Bible where this is the plain meaning of any of those expressions.

Now, Sir, I would be glad to hear from your lips what are your best arguments to refute this *socinian gloss* as Dr. Whitby calls it.

I would say these three things, answered *Paulinus:* First, It is very strange that this must be the true sense of these sacrificial phrases, when this sense does not appear

plainly in any one scripture. However if it must be so, let it be so in the Old Testament as well as in the New; let there be some shadow of it found among the levitical and typical sacrifices of atonement, as well as in Jesus the substantial one; otherwise the types and the substance will have no likeness to one another in those very actions and circumstances, whereby atonement for sin is made, and which are ascribed to both type and substance in the same phrases. Now let these interpreters tell me, which of the sheep or the goats, which of the rams or the bulls, that were sacrificed to atone for sin, ever received power to absolve sinners, or ever were made judges or rewarders in any sense. It is very evident that so far as this forced sense is introduced upon the expressions of *Christ's bearing our sins on the cross,* and his *making atonement for sin,* so far there is an utter departure from the true and obvious meaning of the same expressions, when applied to the typical sacrifices; whereas in the sense which I have given, the same ideas belong both to the typical and the substantial atonement. Dr. Whitby's expositions of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of this chapter sufficiently explain and confirm the true meaning of St. Peter's language.

Besides, let it be observed in the second place, that *the scripture ascribes this atonement of Christ to the office of his priesthood, to his blood, and his death as a sacrifice,* whereas these mistaken interpreters ascribe his taking away sin, either to his doctrine as a prophet, which has been before answered, or in this present sense to his royal power of forgiveness as a king, without ever considering that the beasts which were made atoning sacrifices afford us no shadow of Christ's taking away sin by his prophetical or his kingly office, but only by his priesthood and sacrifice: Nor is there any other way, besides that which I have maintained, to make the scriptures of truth abide in any happy harmony, or the type and the substance to agree.

Paulinus added yet further, I would say again in the third place, would the Jews to whom the gospel of a crucified Christ was first preached in the days of the apostles have understood these phrases of *taking away sin by sacrifice,* or *making atonement for sin* in this socinian sense? And surely this gospel was preached and written by the apostles in such expressions, as the Jews might readily and easily understand: Surely they would so express their doctrine as that their hearers in Judea should receive the most common and obvious sense of the words as they were used in their nation; otherwise the *gospel would be hidden* and lost to them.

Again, let us enquire of the heathens, among whom the apostles preached this gospel, and who had been used to sacrifices and atonements; let us ask of them, whether they would understand those sacrificial phrases in this strange sense? Would they ever imagine that their sins were atoned for by the death of Christ, merely because God the Father was so well pleased with his submission to death, for which death they yet give no sufficient reason, that he raised him to life again, and gave him power to forgive the sins of men? Was this their meaning of atonement when they spoke of and practised their own making atonement to their gods for sin by the sacrifice either of beasts or men? And why should this be supposed to be the sense of the apostles in preaching the gospel which neither Jews nor heathens used, and which neither of them would readily understand?

There is no christian denies this truth, *that God did raise Christ from the dead, and give him power to forgive sins;* but this is not the meaning of his atoning for sin, which is ever ascribed to his blood and death, but never to his life and kingdom. It was after

" he had purged away sins by himself, that is, by the sacrifice of himself;" *Heb.* ix. 26. " That he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, and received his kingdom and power;" *Heb.* i. 3.

But to return to my paper of queries; I must now intreat your excuse for dwelling upon these representations of things too long, and perhaps for rehearsing them too often: But as I am sensible of the great importance of the contest that is between us, I am content to be called a " repeater," if I may be so happy as to hit the soul of the man who hears or reads this in a right vein, and convey the doctrine of the propitiation of Christ for sin with some light and force to the mind by all this variety of expression, and this repetition of ideas.

Here I desire it may be observed, that several of the queries which I have made concerning the *atonement of our sins by the death of Christ,* might be also made with the same justice concerning the *sanctification of our natures by the Holy Spirit;* which two great doctrines are eminently and peculiarly some of the prime subjects and glories of the gospel, and are equally left out of *Agrippa's* creed. Can *Agrippa* ever suppose that all the illustrious and magnificent expressions which are used concerning the work of the Spirit of God on the souls of men, to subdue their sins, *to give them new hearts, to change their temper into holiness, and to comfort them by shedding abroad a sense of the love of God in their hearts,* can be construed into a mere philosophical love and practice of virtue and piety, raised by the rational consideration of those truths which were taught the apostles by the instruction of the Holy Spirit, or which were confirmed among men by his extraordinary gifts? Is this all the meaning of our being *regenerated or born again of the Holy Spirit?* John iii. 3. 5. Is this the sense of those promises in Ezekiel and Zechary, *I will put a new Spirit within you, or I will put my Spirit in you, and cause you to walk in my statutes;* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. *I will pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn;* Zech. xii. 10. And when Christ says, *Your heavenly Father shall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him;* Luke xi. 13. *He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters, which Christ spake of the Spirit, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send,* says he, *in my name; he shall teach you all things, shall guide you into all truth, shall abide with you for ever;* John vii. 38, 39. xiv. 16, 26. xvi. 13. I grant indeed some of the expressions have a prime reference to the extraordinary gifts of the apostles, but others plainly belong to all christians, and perhaps all of them are applicable in a secondary sense to every true disciple of Christ.

But I proceed with the queries. Is this all the meaning of the apostle Paul, when he says, *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;* Rom. v. 5. *He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his;—as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us;* Rom. viii. 9, 14, 26. *Through Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;* Eph. ii. 18. *If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;* Rom. viii. 13. *We through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;* Gal. v. 5. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;* 2 Thess. ii. 13. *Saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;* Tit. iii. 5. And does St. Peter mean no more than extra-

ordinary gifts, when he says, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of* the Spirit unto obedience; 1 Pet. i. 2. and in verse 22. *Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit?* And does St. John mean only the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, when he speaks to all christians, to fathers, young men and children, and tells them, *Ye have an unction from the Holy One which abideth in you, and teaching you all things*, that is, all things necessary to salvation; 1 *John* ii. 20, 27. And many other expressions there are of this kind which are scattered through the New Testament: *No man can say Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit;* 1 Cor. xii. 3. *Ye are the epistle of Christ written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;* 2 Cor. iii. 3. *If the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;* Rom. viii. 11. *Ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit;* Eph. ii. 22. with many and various phrases to the same purpose. And is not the gospel itself supposed on this account to be called the *ministration of the Spirit;* 2 Cor. iii. 8. Let me enquire now, would it not be a very difficult and painful task for any man of just reasoning and a sincere conscience, to interpret all these scripture expressions concerning the work of the Holy Spirit on men in a just conformity to *Agrippa's* creed, and confine them all to extraordinary gifts, merely as an evidence of the truth of the gospel at the first promulgation of it to the world? What! have we had nothing to do with the operations of the Spirit of God in the New Testament for these sixteen hundred years? Were all the promises of the Old Testament, concerning the blessed Spirit so entirely fulfilled in the first age of christianity, that we have nothing now to expect from them? Are all the comforts of this Spirit in the New Testament spent and exhausted, so that none of them remain for christians in our day? And is the same gospel now become a spiritless gospel to men, without a divine converter, or a divine comforter?

Query VII. In the seventh place I would ask leave to put this question also to *Agrippa* and his friends. Are not the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper generally and justly esteemed to be comprehensive emblems of the peculiar glories of christianity, and were they not instituted to keep in mind the chief and most special blessings of the gospel, the peculiar and important doctrines of the blessed Jesus? Now what is it these two sacraments represent to us? Does not baptism design to exhibit the purification of our souls from sin, and the change of our tempers to holiness by the Spirit of God, which is represented as *rivers of water, as clean water, either poured out or sprinkled upon us;* Ezek. xxxvi. 25. which shall make us clean and holy? And in allusion to this, does not Christ himself tell us, that *we must be born of water and of the Spirit, if ever we would see the kingdom of God?* John iii. 5. That we must be washed and purified from our sinful habits by the Spirit of God, and become penitent and holy in heart and life? And that we must enter into the profession of christianity by baptism as the symbol of this inward and divine purification? But where is this to be found in the creed of *Agrippa*.

The other ceremony of the gospel is the *Lord's Supper;* and what does this represent in the institution of it by our blessed Saviour? Does not he himself tell us in the form of this institution, that it is the representation of his own *body which was broken for us* by wounds upon the cross, *and his* own *blood which was shed* there *for the remission of sins;* Matt. xxvi. 28. under the two plain emblems of bread and wine? But are not these sacred representations of such important truths explained away by a forced construction

of the words? Can such strong expressions of a dying Redeemer receive due honour by a confinement of them to a mere memorial of a dying martyr to confirm his doctrine, or by sinking them to a mere figurative manifestation of what sin deserved, without any proper expiation of it? Would an expiring prophet utter such speeches as would naturally lead his disciples into so great a mistake? Would the Saviour of the world in his last conversation with his friends, betray them into such superstitious errors as *Agrippa* supposes the doctrine of his atonement for sin to be? Would his wisdom and his goodness either incline or permit him to tell his disciples so expressly, that *his blood was shed for the remission of their sins*, and mean no more by it than *Agrippa* does?

Query VIII. After I had proved by the force of the former queries, that the gospel doth evidently reveal this doctrine of *Christ's atonement for sin, and our sanctification by the Holy Spirit*, then to confirm this yet further, I would enquire of *Agrippa* in the next place, what were the most necessary and most important blessings which mankind in their sinful and miserable estate stood in need of, and which accordingly the gospel reveals and bestows? Tell me, *Agrippa*, what are our chief necessities, and what are the chief favours which we want from heaven? Do we not find ourselves guilty before God by our many iniquities and violations of his holy law? Do not our hearts accuse and condemn us? And do we not stand in need of divine forgiveness? Is not the awakened conscience of man in his natural estate, solicitous how he shall obtain pardon of the great God? Has not this been the enquiry of thoughtful persons in all ages, *What shall I do to appear before the Lord, and to bow myself before the most high God* with acceptance? *Micah* vi. 6. Has there not been a general tradition among Jews and gentiles, that the anger of God was to be removed by sacrifices, or the putting to death of some animal creature in the room of criminal men? Whence came this universal tradition? Whence this general sense of mankind, that there must be an atonement for sin made by sacrifices? It does not look like the invention of man, as Porphyry has shewn long ago, to cut living creatures to pieces, and burn their entrails, in order to please his Maker. Is it not highly probable therefore that it was some original institution of God, or divine appointment, attended with a promise or encouragement to hope for mercy from an offended God? And what could such sacrifices of brute creatures signify to this purpose; but as they were figures of some more valuable and richer sacrifice? And is not this the very thing which the gospel of Christ reveals, and hereby answers the solicitous and anxious enquiries of guilty men? Even that there is forgiveness to be found with God, and that the sacrifice of atonement is his own Son, *by whom we have redemption from punishment in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins through the riches of his grace.*

Again, what is the next chief concern and enquiry of an awakened soul? I find my nature prone to sin, my senses and passions lead me astray from the inward dictates of my duty: Temptations in this world are great and many, my own strength to resist them is but weakness, they prevail over me notwithstanding all my better resolutions. Is there no assistance in this difficult work to be obtained from heaven, whereby I may keep myself from the defilements of a sinful world, and serve and please my Maker and my God? And is not this also another blessing which the gospel reveals? Even the Spirit of God promised to mortify our sins, to renew our souls to holiness, to sanctify us and reform us to a heavenly temper, to enable us in some measure to do our present duty

here, and fit us for the enjoyment of God hereafter. Thus that sacred book, the New Testament, discovers to us those two most eminent and important blessings which an awakened sinner feels himself to stand in need of; and yet *Agrippa* has left them both out of his creed.

Query IX. Since the gospel has revealed these two blessings in such express language for the relief of sinful man: What is there in the description or proposal of them in the gospel that lies cross to the dictates of right reason? What is there in the literal sense of these doctrines that is contrary to the nature or perfections of God, or disagreeable to the reason of man? What is there that should constrain us to construe them into a metaphorical sense, and to explain them merely as figures and emblems? It is granted indeed, that the reason of man could not find them out; yet when once they are revealed and proposed to us, do they not appear very consistent with our best reasonings about God or man, and consistent also with all other parts of divine revelation?

It must be confessed there are some things so described in scripture, as makes it necessary to explain them by the help of tropes and figures; as for instance, there are several expressions which represent God to us as *seeing with his eyes, as hearing with his ears, as working with his hands, as rejoicing, as grieving, as repenting, &c.* and these cannot be understood in their literal sense, because it is contrary to the nature of God who is a Spirit, contrary to our reason in our best apprehensions of God, and it is also contrary to other places of scripture where God is declared to be *a Spirit* who hath no bodily parts or passions: And these are sufficient arguments to constrain us to forsake the literal sense, and to construe these expressions in scripture as mere figures and resemblances of divine things, spoken after the manner of men. So in the Lord's Supper, when Christ says, *this bread is my body*, it cannot be understood in the literal sense, because it is contrary to the testimony of our senses, our reason, and the scripture, that the body of Christ should be handled and eaten by the apostles, and yet at the same time be sitting at the table and eating with them, with a hundred other absurdities which attend the popish doctrine of transubstantiation; it must be therefore a figurative expression, and it is hard to conceive how any reasonable and honest mind should mistake the true meaning, *viz. this bread is the sign or figure of my body.*

But in the plain scriptural doctrines of the atonement of Christ for sin, and the assistances or influences of the blessed Spirit towards the restoring of our natures to holiness, there is nothing absurd, nothing inconsistent with reason, or with other scriptures, so as to make it necessary to construe them by tropes and figures. This may be made sufficiently to appear, if we ask but a few questions on each of these subjects. And first, of the *atonement of Christ for our sins.*

Is it not a most reasonable thing that a penalty should be annexed to the transgression of God's holy law, in order to deter men from sinning against God? Is not death a proper punishment for sin? Hath not the transgressor well deserved it? Is not the execution of this threatening a proper means to secure the honour of God's authority, his justice, and his government of the world? but is there no room for mercy to interpose and save here and there a criminal? May not divine justice receive the same honour, and the authority and government of God be as effectually secured in the world, by making it appear that sin is punished, and the penalty executed upon a willing and avowed surety, as if the sinner himself were punished? Will not the world learn hereby how dangerous a thing it is to transgress the law of God, when it appears that even mercy itself will not release

the sinner without some atoning sacrifice, without some demonstration of the justice of the law of God, and his hatred of sin? And when so glorious a person, and one so dear to God as his own Son, becomes the surety, how doth this more abundantly manifest that God will not spare wilful criminals, since even his own Son must be smitten when he becomes a surety for the sinner, rather than sin should go unpunished? I would ask yet further,

Why *Agrippa* should think this doctrine unreasonable? Is not suretiship for debts a common thing among men? Is it not practised daily? And is not the surety seized, and the debt exacted from him, if the principal debtor be insolvent? Is he not made to suffer imprisonment, and all the hardships of it on the account of the principal? And is not the debtor discharged if the surety pays the debt? In criminal cases indeed suretiship is not so frequent among men, for they have not such absolute power over the life or limbs of themselves or others, or have they so much love for their friends. But what good reason is there, or can there be, why the Son of God, who had power over his own life, and whose compassion to guilty man was exceeding great, might not become his surety, and suffer death in his stead, that is, pay the debt of suffering which the sinful creature owed to a just God?

Is there not hereby a new and sensible honour done both to the mercy and justice of God the universal Governor arising, from this contrivance of his wisdom, to punish sin on such a surety, and yet to save sinful creatures, both which could hardly have been glorified any other way? For if the penalties had been fully executed on the sinner, mercy would have lost its honours; or if the sinner had been pardoned without an atonement, the justice and authority of God the Governor, would seem to have been too much neglected and dishonoured. Thus this doctrine of atonement is so far from diminishing the honour of the attributes of God, that it highly exalts them.

As to the second doctrine, viz. *the influences of the Spirit of God to sanctify our nature*, what is there more agreeable to reason than this? When God saw the weakness of his creature man since the fall, to change his own nature into holiness, and to fulfil his duty, how agreeable is it to our best apprehensions of the mercy of God, to suppose that he would afford some divine aids to those who seek them? That he would graciously assist the feeble endeavours of his creatures to repent of sin, and to spend their lives in obedience to their Maker, and that by the operations of his own Spirit; and that by this Spirit of his he would enable weak creatures to overcome their powerful temptations?

But I am very brief in these enquiries, because the objections against these doctrines have been often and abundantly satisfied in answers that have been given to socinian writers in former and later times. Since therefore there is no necessary reason that requires us to construe these scriptural expressions into tropes and figures, why should we not understand the divine descriptions of these blessings of the gospel in their own most evident and proper sense? Why should not *Agrippa* understand them as we do in their plain meaning, since I am persuaded *Agrippa* wants them as much as we? Why does he not humbly receive them, and live upon them as the favours of a condescending God? Or let him boldly declare, that he does not want them, and therefore he cannot believe them.

Query X. And now the very last enquiry I shall put to *Agrippa* and his friends, is this, which I mentioned before in my discourse, when you turn these peculiar glories

and blessings of the gospel into tropes and figures, what is it you aim at, or expect to gain by it? What is the advantage pretended or hoped for by all this force upon the scripture, but by stripping the religion of Christ of its peculiar honours, to make it appear more like the religion of nature, both to ourselves and our infidel acquaintance? But give me leave to ask in the name of God, why are we so much ashamed of these peculiar and supernatural glories of the gospel, which were sent from heaven as the choicest blessings to a wretched world? Must all the revealed doctrines of God and his Son be brought down to the relish and gust of infidels, before we who call ourselves christians dare to believe them? Is there no truth of God to be credited unless it square with their opinions? Why should we be so solicitous to avoid the displeasure of those who deny and ridicule these articles of faith, which are the obvious and sacred meaning of the words of scripture, and which are given us to be *the life of our souls?* Why are we so fond to please and flatter those men who deny the plain and express doctrines of the New Testament, and destroy the most natural sense and design of the two sacraments, the two only ceremonies of the christian religion? Why so zealous and foolish to compliment the professed adversaries of Christ and his blessed gospel at so dear a rate, as to part with the noblest favours of heaven to humour and please them?

To conclude, if these were doctrines or propositions only mentioned occasionally, and but once or twice in the Bible; if they were only taught in emblems and metaphors and dark prophecies: If they were only hinted in the warm and pathetic parts of scripture, and never mentioned in those places where the doctrines of christianity were professedly taught; if they were preached only by one apostle, or only written in one part of an epistle; if they were such doctrines as stood contrary to the nature of God or the reason of man; if they received no testimony or support from the former revelations of God, or from other parts of the divine dispensations towards men, a honest and studious man might be ready to suspect, whether the words which express them ought to be construed in the literal sense; or at least, whether they were articles of any importance in christianity. But when this scheme of truth is spoken of by Christ himself as far as was proper in his life-time, and that both in parables and in plain language; when it is plainly taught by Peter and John as well as Paul, and that not only in one part of their writings, but in almost every place where the great doctrines of christianity are designedly taught, and where such truths might properly be inserted; when their epistles are full of this language wheresoever they speak of the great and important doctrines of the gospel, or of the practical uses of them; when it is foretold by the ancient prophets, prefigured in the chief ceremonies of the ancient church, and held forth in the sacraments of the New Testament; I say, when I put all these things together, and others which I have mentioned as proofs of these two eminent articles of christianity, I am so overpowered with evidence concerning the true and plain meaning of the language of scripture, that I am ready to wonder how it is possible for any man of reason in the sincere exercise of it, to read the New Testament, and not see there these great articles of the *atonement for our sins by the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

I would therefore entreat *Agrippa* and his friends to consider once again, whether they may not be mistaken in their strange interpretations of the word of God. I would entreat them once again to read the gospels and epistles with a honest heart and without prejudice or bias from their former opinions. And with their studies let them join their

earnest supplications to the great God to guard them from error, and lead them into all truth; and at the same time let them maintain a pious resolution to subject their belief and conscience to every thing that shall appear to be the plain meaning of God in his word: *He giveth wisdom to them that ask it: He giveth to those who are good in his sight, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge;* Eccles. ii. 26. He bestows wisdom on the humble, and the meek will he guide in his way: He will shew them the secret of his covenant, and lead them into his salvation; *Psalm* xxv. 9, 24.

SECTION III.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR SIN ARGUED.

Cavenor was one of the friends and disciples of *Agrippa*, though *Paulinus* knew it not. When he heard these queries of *Paulinus*, he was struck with a sensible surprize to find the whole current of scripture run so contrary to the opinions he had lately embraced, and he now confessed he had never well considered these matters before. The case in short was this: He had fallen into company with some persons who were almost weary of christianity, and had dropped as much of it as their consciences would let them part with at once: He was too easily led away from his former faith by the ridicule which was often cast by the disciples or friends of *Agrippa* on these doctrines which *Paulinus* defended: He was borne down by the bounces and boasts of just reasoning, which they never failed to make, and which, as they pretended, lay all on their side. However, he seemed at present astonished to observe, that the glorious designs of God and his grace in the gospel, led us plainly into other kind of doctrines than what is contained in *Agrippa's* creed, and particularly that concerning *the atonement of Christ for sin.* He could not at once freely and utterly renounce his errors, yet he was a little afraid to persist in them. He felt a sensible concern about his eternal interests, and fell to enquiring, upon supposition that this scheme of *Agrippa* concerning the designs of the death of Christ, should prove to be a mistake, whether it were not an innocent error. "Are there not many mistakes, said he, concerning some truths of the christian religion, and concerning the sense of many texts in the New Testament, which are very pardonable things? And what greater mischief is there in denying the proper atonement of Christ, than in many other mistaken opinions which *Paulinus* himself would grant might be received and embraced very innocently, and without danger to our christianity."

Ferventio, who was a very warm and zealous defender of the common faith, and much in the same sentiments with *Paulinus*, as to the doctrines of the gospel, immediately took fire when he heard *Cavenor* ask such a question as this: *What mischief, says he, is there in these opinions?* There is a long and dreadful train of mighty mischiefs in them, there is a great appearance of infidelity, and a large step toward it: There is a bold affront offered to scripture in some of its plainest revelations, and a denial of the blessed gospel in some of its chief glories: There is unspeakable injury done to the honour of God, both in his justice and his grace, there is a sinking of the dignity of the Son of God, as a dying Mediator, into a mere prophet and witness; and there is a dreadful risk and hazard to the souls of men, by encouraging them to venture into the presence of God without a sacrifice. This is not a little dispute about the logical relations of the

atonement of Christ to our pardon; nor whether the sufferings and death of Christ as a propitiation for sin must be properly imputed to us, or whether we must rely upon their merit merely as the price of a salvation purchased for us: This is not *a strife about words*, nor a lesser controversy whether faith is an instrument to recieve this atonement, or a condition of having the fruits of it bestowed upon us: No, the contest here is, *whether our Lord Jesus Christ made any atonement for sin at all or no, by all his sufferings? And whether his death laid any such sort of foundation for our hope of pardon?* We may bear with a hundred errors and mistakes in the lesser things of christianity, the doubtful disputables in opinion and practice, as the apostle calls them; *Rom.* xiv. 1—6. These may be safely debated on both sides among wise and humble christians of different sentiments; but I hope the doctrine of the *proper atonement of Christ for sin* shall never be numbered among the doubtful disputables: I own I have such a formidable idea of the denial of it, that I can hardly think such a gross error ought to be borne with in a christian church, where it is openly avowed and maintained in opposition to so many express scriptures. Let us but take a more particular survey of the mischiefs of this opinion, and then let *Cavenor* tell me whether it be such a harmless mistake as he imagines.

First, Is not a denial of the propitiation of Christ for sin a very evident renunciation of one of the chief glories and blessings of christianity? And to make this appear, I would enquire, was not this doctrine one of those noble and needful revelations brought to us by the gospel of Christ, which, as *Paulinus* has intimated, the heathen philosophers never knew, and which the reason of man could never find out? Is it not such a complete atonement and such a divine medium of obtaining pardon of sin and peace with God, which all the gentile world seemed to want, and which they sought for in vain among their endless inventions of ceremonies and rites, and bloody sacrifices, and which the Jews themselves were acquainted with but in an imperfect manner by the types and figures of their law? Where is the religion that can propose such a relief for a guilty conscience, such a balm as this for the broken heart of a penitent offender? And does not the denial of it sink the gospel of Christ in this respect almost down to the level of heathen philosophy and to the religion of nature, whereby a sincere penitent might derive some kind of hope of the forgiveness of sin from the mere mercy of a God? Nor indeed does it leave us so much of this divine doctrine for the comfort of mourning penitents, as the Jews themselves enjoyed under their veils and emblems and smoking sacrifices.

In the two last centuries, when the doctrine of *Socinus* prevailed in some parts of Europe, who denied the satisfaction of Christ for sin, our fathers were wont to charge it with a reduction of christianity to a sort of mahumetism; for the Turks confess Christ to be a great prophet; they believe the pardon of sin, and the resurrection of the dead, and the future recompences of heaven and hell: But how much more does the Scripture teach of the way to obtain salvation than the Alcoran does, if the doctrine of the proper sacrifice of Christ be set aside, with all the blessed truths and duties which are derived from it? The socinian error, saith Doctor Arrowsmith in his *Tactica Sacra*, is more properly called a subtle mahumetism, and it opens its mouth as a whirlpool of irreligion. And Grotius himself in his epistle to Wallæus, speaking of the socinians, upon this account will not allow them the title of christians; for they have preserved, says he, christianity in the name, but they have destroyed the thing; and therefore

I can make but little difference between them and the mahometans, who never speak evil of Christ.

The papists, who have corrupted christianity beyond all that ever went before them, yet have not debased it to this extreme degree; for though they have introduced their fastings and scourgings and various penances to make a sort of satisfaction for their sins, yet they never renounced the proper atonement and satisfaction of Christ, but always maintained that doctrine in honourable language; and they lay the foundation even of all the merit of their own mortifications, and their devotions upon the superior merit of the Son of God: But *Agrippa* and his party in this respect are worse than the papists themselves, for they renounce and cancel the merit of the death of Christ, and exclude it from making any atonement at all for the sins of men.

In the present age the late Dr. Samuel Clarke, though he hath publicly departed from the common faith in his book written on the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, yet still he maintains the *satisfaction and atonement of Christ*, and has vindicated it in his treatise of *Revealed Religion*, and in several of his sermons which have been printed since his death. He tells us, in the fourth volume, page 122, "that the sacrifice of the death of Christ, which is the foundation of God's accepting our repentance, consistently with the honours of his divine laws, was inestimably the greatest blessing that ever was conferred on the sons of men; yea, the fountain and spring, and the original foundation of all other blessings." Now what could Doctor Clarke think of their religion who deny the very foundation of God's accepting our repentance, who deny that which is the greatest blessing of God to men, and the original fountain of all others? Or what shall we think of such a doctrine, or such a sort of christianity as this?

I must confess, in my opinion, says *Ferventio*, Doctor Clarke, as great a man as he was, talked very inconsistently in maintaining the doctrine of the *satisfaction of Christ for sin*, while he denied his true divinity; for where is sufficient excellency in the person to make such atonement, if it be not founded in supreme godhead?

Cavenor was a little warmed to see so great a writer accused as absurd and inconsistent. I will not pretend, says he, to defend Doctor Clarke's sentiments about the person of Christ or about his sacrifice of atonement; but this I may venture to say, there is no such inconsistency between them as you imagine: Does the scripture expressly say, it is supreme godhead in our blessed Saviour that alone can make atonement for sin? Where does that text stand? Now since Doctor Clarke allows him to be so excellent a being, as to be employed by the Father in making this world and all the inhabitants of it; is there not worth and merit enough in the Maker to die as a ransom for the things that he made? Is he not a being of sufficient dignity to redeem a world of mankind by his death, when they are all the works of his hands? But this only by the way: I would not divert the current of your zeal: Nor would I, says *Ferventio*, suffer this to go unanswered; but I must now proceed to shew what other mischiefs are contained in a denial of the atonement of Christ.

Secondly, Is it not a foul dishonour and injury to the holy law of God, as well as an affront to the wisdom, the authority, and the justice of the lawgiver, to take away from him that noble and glorious satisfaction which the death of Christ has made for the sins of men? Does not this denial of his atonement construe his death either into a mere martyrdom, or at best into an empty sign and figure of what sin deserved? For *Agrippa* does not seem to have any notion of the mercy and justice of God accepting of a surety

instead of the death of the original offender, and thereby consenting to forgive his offences. Was this all the Son of God died for, to be a sign and figure of what sin deserved? These are useful things in religion when they are invented and appointed of God, as emblems and types of that more substantial and more important sacrifice which should effectually take away sin from the conscience: Such a sign and figure was *the blood of bulls and goats,* which were slain under the levitical dispensation; and it is honour enough for bulls and goats to have their blood made a shadow or type of such a sacrifice. But it is certainly a dishonour to the great God and his Son, to sink the design of the death of Christ to so low a purpose; it is high dishonour to have those great, important, and substantial things, *viz.* the bloody and painful death of the blessed Jesus, and the real atonement which was made for sin thereby, and which was the price of the ransom of our souls, reduced only to a figure and sign of the punishment which sin deserved, without any real expiation of it: And hereby the sins of men are supposed to be forgiven without any reparation of the dishonour done to the law of God.

Thirdly, This doctrine of *Agrippa,* which denies the propitiation of Christ, staggers the faith of a humble penitent christian; it breaks in upon his hope, it unhinges his soul in its daily transactions with God, it weakens his efforts in duty, and confounds his sweetest consolations: For he has been instructed by the plain language of the New Testament, to build his eternal hopes on the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, and to draw his surest expectations of pardon from thence. He has been taught to *draw near to God in prayer by the blood of Jesus, in this new and living way which he has consecrated for us;* Heb. x. 19, 20. He has been taught to ask *forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, or for his sake;* Eph. iv. 32. and *to trust in the blood of Jesus as a propitiation which cleanses from all sin;* Rom. iii. 25. 1 John i. 7, 9. The prophets, the apostles, and the Son of God himself, seem all to conspire to teach him this lesson, and to have pointed out to him this hope and refuge. What trembling and terrors will it bring into his conscience, and how will it shake his soul off from her solid and peaceful foundation, when he shall be told that the death of Christ made no proper atonement for sin, and that his hopes which were built upon it were all vain and groundless, for that the language of the scripture must be construed quite to another meaning. It was under the influence of this sacred truth, that he had arrived to a stability of peace, and attained to a considerable degree of holiness arising from the love of a forgiving God, and a suffering Saviour. He could not but believe what St. John told him, that *if we confess our sins, and walk in the light of holiness, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all unrighteousness;* 1 John i. 7, 9. He believed the lesson St. Paul taught him, *that Christ was set forth as a propitiation for sin by faith in his blood;* Rom. iii. 25. and his encouragement to hope for pardoning mercy upon such a foundation, was much stronger and more effectual to relieve his guilty fears, while the blood of the Son of God appeared in scripture as a medium of atonement for the sins of men. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of a humble and believing penitent, when God will justify upon this foot? Who shall condemn when Christ has died to procure pardon?* But he is quite confounded if this hope be vain.

The humble christian has been taught to rejoice in life and in death with these words upon his lips, and the sense of the love of God has been shed abroad in many a heart by faith in a dying Saviour, *who has made peace by his own blood.* This has kindled through all the powers of a good man a warm and ingenuous love to God and Christ;

to God, who sent his own beloved Son to die as a sacrifice for his sins, and to *Jesus Christ who loved him, and gave himself to death for him:* And this love rising from a sense of the death of Christ for his salvation, has richly abounded unto all the duties of holiness. Gratitude to a Redeemer who hath died in his stead, hath constrained him to spend his life to his honour, as 2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they who live should not live to themselves, but to him who died for them.* But what agonies, and what new amazement must overwhelm the spirit of such a pious man, when he is informed that neither Paul nor John are to be understood in this sense, and that Christ never died with this design to make a proper atonement for his sins? How will his hopes languish, his addresses to God flag and fail, and the springs of his love and obedience be weakened, when he is deprived of the doctrine which hath all along been the life of his faith, the language of his prayer, and the support of his hope, and which he thought he had built upon the most express and undeniable testimony of the word of God? What can I believe, saith he, if this be not true? Or what have I to rest upon, if this foundation be destroyed.

Fourthly, This new doctrine of *Agrippa*, does it not shamefully diminish and debase the glorious design of the incarnation of the Son of God? Does it not sink the condescension of so divine a person to so low a degree, that one of the ancient prophets raised from the dead, or a new prophet brought upon the stage of the world, might almost, if not altogether, have supplied his place? Was this all that a being of such transcendent excellency as the Son of God, must come down from heaven for? What! Must the Son of God himself be exposed to so much pain and shame, and go through so many humiliations; must he suffer so many indignities, and endure such a bloody and painful death, merely to become a martyr or witness of the truth of such doctrines as a meaner prophet might have taught the world, and might have confirmed them with his death, or sealed them with his blood? Or was this cursed death of the blessed Jesus designed for no nobler a purpose than what *the blood of bulls and goats* continually performed, that is, to teach mankind in a way of emblem that sin deserved death? But *Paulinus* having intimated the dishonour of such sentiments, I pursue it no further, but proceed,

Fifthly, This opinion of *Agrippa* concerning the death and sufferings of Christ, by taking away one of the chief glories of christianity, renders the christian religion a thing of much less value and importance. Instead of ingratiating the New Testament with infidels, and reconciling their minds to it by explaining away some of its noblest revelations, it will probably have a contrary effect upon many of them, and tempt them to say, "What is the New Testament worth, if it tells me so little more than the light of nature teaches? Why so much pains and labour, so much criticism and toilsome argument, such warm and vehement zeal to support the divine authority of the New Testament, and the religion of Christ, if we learn no more from it than *Agrippa's* creed?" And thus one of the chief designs or pretences of *Agrippa* and his friends is lost thereby, which was to bring christianity into esteem with the deists, by sinking the doctrines of it almost to a level with natural religion. *Agrippa's* creed has debased it so far, that infidelity may take no disgust at it, and so far stripped it of its fairest honours, till the infidel shall say, there is but little in our religion that differs from his, and that he is better without a gospel than with it, since it makes such a pother to so little purpose.

And indeed there are some persons, who by suffering themselves to be seduced into *Agrippa's* scheme, have already learned to undervalue the writings of the blessed Paul, though he was the greatest and best of all the divine writers. They find so much of the atonement of Christ in his epistles, that they reject them at once because they will not believe this doctrine. They represent him as a Jew of a warm imagination, an enthusiast with his head full of propitiations, sacrifices, and other pharisaical notions, to such a degree that he deserves no regard, and that the New Testament would be much better without his writings. Another step, and the gospels will be turned out too, when they have learned of the deists to say, that the sermons and speeches of Christ, so far as they are rational and intelligible, contain nothing but mere natural religion; the rest is all enthusiasm, and it is not worth while to defend any of these gospels as divine. Thus the belief of *Agrippa's* creed has an evident tendency to make men disbelieve the New Testament itself.

Sixthly, When we refuse to receive a doctrine which is so clearly and expressly revealed in the word of God, as the atonement of Christ is; when we are taught to deny a doctrine which is so strongly asserted there, and so frequently introduced and repeated upon every occasion, it evidently abates that veneration which even christians themselves have or should have for the New Testament, though it should not prevail so far as to turn them into infidels. It teaches men to grow too bold with scripture, and twist it to any purposes: It disgraces the word of the living God, and sinks the character of it into *a mere leaden rule, as the papists call it, which may be bent to serve or support any opinion.* It tempts us to turn the brightest discoveries, and the peculiar glories of it into mere lessons of morality. When we explain away one of the most evident and substantial doctrines of it at this rate, it gives us a sort of effrontery and ungodly courage to oppose the most express truths which are written in scripture, if we can possibly construe and translate them into another sense. It introduces a sort of profane hardiness into the conscience, and emboldens us to renounce the most evident lessons of St. Peter, Paul, and John, and deny the truth of them even to the very teeth of the sacred writers.

Such a practice as this shews our great unwillingness to submit our opinions to the dictates of heaven, and argues an unbecoming pride of our own reasoning powers. It draws us into the very spirit as well as the sentiments of Socinus and his followers, who have ventured to affirm, "If it should be written in the holy scriptures not once only, but often, that Christ made satisfaction to God for sin, I would not therefore believe the matter as you think." And again, "Even the greatest force is to be used with such words rather than take them in the obvious sense." Thus speaks Socinus in his treatise of *Satisfaction*, and in his Epistle to Balcerimicius. How evident is it that such men refuse a subjection to the revelation of God himself, nor will they abide by the decisions of scripture, when it doth not speak such things as suit their unhappy relish? And it is a very dangerous thing to enter into this temper and spirit.

Peter and the beloved John, when they treat of their Master's death, assert with frequency and great strength of expression, that doctrine which their Master himself thought proper to give some notice of in his life-time. It is true, he mentions it more sparingly, because their prejudices then were not able to bear it; John xvi. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.* But when they were

filled with the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, they published and explained their Master's doctrines more at large; they then tell us of *his bearing our sins on his body on the tree*, of his *redeeming us by his precious blood as a lamb without blemish*, of *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus upon us*, of our *being washed from sin in his blood, and redeemed unto God thereby;* and use the same sort of language with St. Paul, who learned his gospel also by the revelation of Jesus Christ; and who acquaints us that he *gave up his life a ransom for sinful men*, that *his blood was shed for the remission of sins, that he was made a curse for us that he might redeem us from the curse of the law*, which pronounces death upon every sinner, and that *he hath taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and made peace by the blood of his cross between God and man*. But the indulgence of *Agrippa's* scheme encourages us to contradict Christ and his apostles at once, by taking away the obvious and natural sense of their words, under a pretence of making their doctrine more honourable and more conformable to the nature and reason of things.

When a man has once persuaded his conscience to deny this doctrine of the *propitiation of Christ for sins*, which is so plainly taught in scripture, and in such various forms of speech, what is there of doctrine in the New Testament, which they may not deny or turn into an allegory and figure? I should be ready to fear that neither the perverse sentiments of Mr. Woolston, who turned the miracles of Christ into allegory, nor any other idle and unscriptural scheme of interpretation, would be very hard to defend upon such principles, and after such a step as this. If the propitiation of sin by the sufferings of Christ may be thus interpreted away by pretended figures, and explained into the doctrines and duties of mere natural religion, what may not jewish tropes and figures be capable of doing? What doctrine is there that they cannot evaporate and destroy? In short, if we accustom ourselves to such interpretations of scripture as *Agrippa* makes use of, it will gradually lead us into such a gross abuse of words and phrases, that we may bring our consciences and our lips frequently to speak one thing and mean another: And if Christ and his apostles mean no more when they preach the gospel to the Jews or gentiles in all these sacrificial phrases, than what *Agrippa* pretends, I fear men will be tempted to set up for a defence of loose and large equivocation upon the foot of tropes and figures, and make Christ and his apostles their pattern and their example.

And that I may multiply no more particulars on this awful and displeasing subject, I add, in the last place, that this unhappy doctrine brings even the salvation of our souls into question and danger. I would not dare pronounce *damnable heresy* or destruction where Christ or his apostles have not pronounced it; and yet I would not venture to approach within the sweep of such a sentence. I should be dreadfully afraid of standing under the terror and vengeance of that text; Heb. x. 26, 27. *If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.* The case here described seems to be this: The sacred writer had been discoursing in the beginning of this epistle about the dignity of the person of our blessed Lord, and had introduced him in the following chapters into his glorious office of a High-Priest: But, in the ninth and tenth chapters, he describes very particularly his becoming *a sacrifice for the sins of men*, and shews how he made atonement for our

moral transgressions in the sight of God as the Lord of conscience, even as *the blood of bulls and goats* under the jewish law made atonement for legal defilements or ceremonial faults before God as king of their nation, or as visible head of their church. This is called, Heb. ix. 13. *Sanctifying the unclean to the purifying of the flesh;* and he then argues, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, or works deserving death, that you may serve the living God."

And to make it further appear that this is not a mere matter of speculation or opinion, he subjoins a further practical use of it in the tenth chapter, when he had finished this doctrine in the eighteenth verse, he shews us in the succeeding verses what use we are to make of it; and that is to *enter into the holiest*, or address the God of heaven with confidence *by the blood of Jesus, and draw near to him in full assurance of faith, having our hearts* as it were *sprinkled with his blood* of atonement, and delivered thereby *from an evil* or guilty *conscience*. He proceeds then to make another inference, *viz.* that the jewish converts or Hebrews *should hold fast their profession of the christian faith without wavering, and not forsake the christian assemblies and worship;* verses 24, 25. *For, says he, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth,* if we depart from christianity, and particularly from the great and important doctrines of it which my pen has just written, that is, "the sacrifice of Christ for the obtaining the pardon of our sins," and that after such evident conviction and constraining reason to believe it, there remains no more sacrifice for sin to those who deny or evacuate this sacrifice of Christ." Now "if blood was appointed to make atonement for the soul;" *Lev.* xvii. 22. "if there was no remission of levitical defilement to be obtained under the jewish law without shedding of blood;" if the priest was never to enter into the most holy place, nor appear before God there without the blood of the sacrifice; *Lev.* xvi. 14, 15. if Christ himself as the High-Priest and representative of his people, would "not once enter into heaven to appear there in the presence of God for us without his blood;" *Heb.* ix. 12, 24. surely they run a most dreadful risk of unpardoned guilt and divine indignation, who renounce the only effectual sacrifice for sin, even that which the Son of God has offered, and venture into the presence of God without the blood of sprinkling upon them, without faith in the blood of Christ. The very close connexion of these dreadful words of threatening, with so long and particular a discourse on the atonement made by the blood of Christ, seems to point this threatening not merely against those who are apostates from all the christian doctrine, but particularly against those who forsake and renounce this great truth of the "sacrifice of Christ for sin." And let it be observed that the form of the threatening, "there remains no more sacrifice," seems to have a peculiar reference to the denial or renunciation of this doctrine.

Some think the words of St. Peter may confirm this of St. Paul, 2 *Peter* ii. 1. where he foretels of "false teachers, who shall bring in damnable heresies, in Greek, heresies of destruction, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction." Now as in natural religion, "a denial that God made us," is in effect the same thing as a "denial of the God that made us," so in revealed religion to "deny that the Lord Jesus bought us," is it not much the same as to "deny the Lord Jesus that bought us?" For it is a renouncing him under that character or office by which he becomes a Saviour, and therefore swift destruction follows upon it. But I will not insist on this, the other is sufficient.

SECTION IV.

THE NECESSITY OF THIS DOCTRINE REPRESENTED IN THE EXPRESS WORDS OF TWO LEARNED MEN OF WELL-KNOWN CHARITY, AND OF A CATHOLIC SPIRIT.

But that I may not appear to stand alone in this sentiment, which may seem uncharitable, says *Ferventio*, I would appeal to the late reverend and learned Doctor John Evans, who in a book he wrote in express vindication of christian charity, entitled, "A Second Letter to Mr. Cumming about Scripture Consequences," page 88, &c. expresses himself in such strong language as I would rehearse at large, that the force of his arguments may appear. I have transcribed it into a little pocket book to carry it always about me in these seasons of error and apostacy, that I might have it ready to shew upon every occasion, how zealous a defender of this doctrine he was, though we know he was a man of some latitude in other points of strict orthodoxy. "There are some scripture passages," says he, "which contain propositions that are declared in the passages themselves necessary to be believed in order to salvation, as that 'Jesus is the Messiah;' *John* viii. 24. 'that he is come in the flesh,' 1 *John* iv. 2—6. This, says he, are the first sort of fundamentals or "necessary articles, because the Holy Ghost in scripture hath expressly made the belief of them terms of salvation." Then he adds secondly, "I think the Spirit of God may have signified the universal necessity of believing some truths, by other ways of express declaration, which are as full and obligatory, as his saying in so many words, "that he that believes them shall be saved, or he that believes them not shall perish." As, when the revelation of a doctrine is very express and plain: When it is set in several lights, or expressed in several phrases, all pointing very forcibly to one and the same common sense: When the Spirit of God lays great stress upon it, either by mentioning it at every turn in the sacred writings, or by interweaving it with the main doctrines and institutions of christianity; or by making the blessings, without which we cannot be saved, to depend upon it, and even upon the belief of it: Or by representing it as the foundation of practical godliness. When, I say, I find these marks affixed to any doctrine of revelation in the revelation itself; I mean, all or most of them concurring; I apprehend them to be an express testimony of the Spirit of God, that such a truth is universally necessary, fully equivalent to the former. I shall only instance in one truth, which though it hath, as I have just observed, the former mark also of universal necessity, has these additional marks too, *viz.* "that Christ died a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins."

I know no truth more plainly expressed, or more frequently inculcated in the scriptures, and this in a variety of phrases of obvious meaning, especially comparing the Old and New Testament together: "That God laid on him the iniquities of us all; that he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; died for our sins; was delivered for our offences; bore the sins of many; bore our sins in his body on the tree; made his soul an offering for sin; was made sin and a curse for us; suffered, the just for the unjust; gave himself a ransom for all; made reconciliation for the sins of the people; is set forth as a propitiation:" Besides many other phrases used in the case; with the plain sense of which I cannot but think any honest mind may be safely trusted, though he knew none of the hypotheses built upon it on the one hand, and notwithstanding all the subtilties of the socinians to enervate the force of them on

the other. At the same time I find the greatest stress laid upon this doctrine in the express declarations of scripture. Divine perfections are said to be eminently displayed in it: His love; *Rom.* v. 6—8. "God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us;" 1 *John* iv. 10. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." His wisdom; *Eph.* i. 7, 8. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." His righteousness; *Rom.* iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It is the scope of the espistle to the Hebrews to shew, that the mosaical sacrifices were intended to prefigure it. The great blessings of the covenant are expressly made to depend upon it *viz.* our redemption. 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. "For as much as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The pardon of our sins; *Eph.* i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;" which words are repeated in *Col.* i. 14. and again, *Heb.* ix. 14, 26. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" *verse* 26.—"Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Our access to God; *Heb.* x. 19, 20. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us." Our eternal redemption; *Heb.* ix. 12. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." And the whole covenant of grace; *Heb.* x. 29. "The blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified." *Heb.* xiii. 20. "The blood of the everlasting covenant." The only two visible rites instituted under the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are expressly described as referring to it, and representations of it. *Rom.* vi. 3. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" *Matt.* xxvi. 28. "For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." It is represented as the great encouragement to christians under their guilty fears; *Rom.* viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." And it is often inculcated as a principal motive to christian practice; *Rom.* vi. 3—11. "We are baptized into his death,—that as Christ was raised from the dead,—we also should walk in newness of life: Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed: Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin; 2 *Cor.* v. 14, 15. The love of Christ constraineth us, for we thus judge—that he died for all, that they—should not live to themselves, but to him who died for them; *Tit.* ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. It is spoken of as the glory of the christian religion; 1 *Cor.* i. 23, 24. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It is that which the founders of it,

under Christ, chiefly gloried in; *Gal.* vi. 14. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And it is made the chief subject of their preaching; 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. "But I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Besides this, our actual justification is expressly annexed to our faith in his blood; *Rom.* iii. 25. In a word, this doctrine is interwoven in the revelation itself with the whole of the christian religion. These things laid together would oblige me to conclude this doctrine to be most fundamental in christianity; even though it had not the first character annexed to it, *viz.* "an express declaration of scripture that it is necessary to our salvation." Thus much says this learned writer.

And as Doctor Evans, who was well known to be a person of large charity, makes the belief of *the propitiation of Christ* necessary to salvation, at least to those who have the New Testament in their hands to lead them into all christian truth; so the late venerable and learned Doctor Whitby, who was no favourer of the peculiar principles of John Calvin, nor an enemy to extensive charity, makes *faith in the atonement of Christ* as necessary as Doctor Evans does. See his preface to the first general epistle of St. John, where he cites the words of our Saviour; *John* vi. 53. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you:" And then adds, The express words of Christ clearly declare the necessity of faith in his body given, and his blood shed for the remission of sins, to justification and salvation, we "being justified by his blood, and through faith in his blood," as *Rom.* iii. 25. and *chapter* v. 9.

He goes on to prove the same point from the plain declarations of St. Paul, who among the many things he preached to the Corinthians, as things by the belief of which they should be saved, mentions three articles. First of all, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; secondly, "that he was buried;" and thirdly, "that he rose from the dead;" 1 *Cor.* xv. 1—4. The doctrine of the sufficiency of faith in Christ's death for "justification without the works of the law," is by the same apostle declared to be so necessary, that he saith of them who gainsayed it, "Christ is become of no effect to you,—ye are fallen from grace;" *Gal.* v. 2. 4. Thus far Doctor Whitby. Now what would these gentlemen have said to *Agrippa*, if he had acquainted them with his scheme, if we may judge of their sentiments by these citations? All their charity would not have allowed him a place in a christian church, nor thought him worthy of the privilege of our holy communion.

Ferventio having cited two such authors as these, supposed he had sufficiently secured himself from the censure of an uncharitable spirit: But to defend his sentiments yet further, he proceeds thus: I would fain know, says he, *what is charity*, when the word is used in this sort of debate. Though charity, is said by St. Paul; 1 Cor. xiii. 7. *to believe all things and to hope all things*, yet can we ever think that charity obliges us to believe that man to be a christian, who renounces one chief office of Christ? Or to hope that *Agrippa*, has all the necessaries of christianity, when it is so evident by his own confession that he wants several of them? Will charity require us to say, that any man will find *propitiation for his sins through faith in the blood of Christ*, who denies that this blood hath made any real propitiation for sin, and hath no faith in it for that purpose, and who continues to do this after the whole New Testament is put into his hands, and these scriptures which so plainly assert it, are pointed out to him in abundance

and variety? Christian charity, my friends, though it ought to be stretched to a large extent, yet it ought not to renounce truth and scripture, nor must it be boundless and unlimitable.

> "Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines,
> Quos ultra citraq; nequit consistere rectum."—*Hor.*
>
> "There is a mean in things, its bounds are sure:
> Nor truth nor goodness can extremes endure."

Charity is a necessary duty to men by the authority of God, and in God's name let us exercise this christian grace, according to the true measures and degrees and kinds of it toward all where God requires, all to whom Christ or St. Paul would have exercised it. But as they are our leaders or standards, let us not pretend to please God better, or seek the name of better christians, by going beyond the bounds that they have appointed. Perhaps my charity would extend so far, as to include a heathen deist according to the general revelations of grace made to Adam or Noah, if any such person should be found diligent and sincere in the search of truth by the light of nature, and constant in the daily worship of one true God, and zealous to practise the common rules of virtue among men, who is humbly penitent where he falls short and trusts in the general mercy of God, while he has never yet heard of the gospel of Christ, nor ever enjoyed any opportunity of acquaintance with Jesus and his salvation. But where the New Testament is known, and sufficient evidences of the truth of the gospel shine round about us, where a man has capacity and leisure to read and search out the truth, if he still obstinately persist in his infidelity, may not charity itself allow that there is some very criminal prejudice blinds his eyes, and that he lies exposed to that dreadful sentence, *he that believes not shall be damned:* Mark xvi. 16. And in the same manner, where a person reads the New Testament, and has all proper opportunities for understanding the sense of it, and yet renounces this doctrine of the *death of Christ as a sacrifice of atonement for sin*, I think I have sufficient ground to say, it is owing to some criminal prejudice indulged; and in that case, to repeat the language of the apostle, *There remains no more sacrifice for his sins, but a certain fearful expectation, &c.* Heb. x. 26, 27.

SECTION V.

QUERIES URGED AGAINST THE NECESSITY OF BELIEVING THIS DOCTRINE.

All this while *Cavenor* sat silent: But it was easy to see by the changes of his countenance, and the passions of his face, that he was not unmoved. At last he declared the musings of his soul in this manner: I am as much surprized now with *Ferventio's* zeal in proclaiming the *necessity of this doctrine of atonement in order to salvation*, as I was before to find so many arguments which I never thought of to defend the doctrine itself among the queries of *Paulinus;* though I am bold to say that the reasonings of *Paulinus* carry more force and evidence with them than the warm discourse of *Ferventio* on this subject. What, shall I not be a christian, and can I not be saved except I become a convert to this opinion? Surely those truths should be most exceeding plain, both as to the expressions and the sense of them in scripture, which demand our faith under such a

penalty. I confess I have been leaning towards the opinions of *Agrippa*, but my reason in its sincere exercises is almost won over by the argument of *Paulinus*, and I am ready to become his disciple. I must acknowledge also, that I would take care of my immortal interests, and I dread the thoughts of being found in so dangerous a mistake as *Ferventio* has represented. But pray, *Ferventio*, give me leave to doubt a little of the force of your reasonings, and permit me to ask you a few questions on this head.

Query I. Can no man partake of salvation unless he be particularly acquainted with all the mediums of it? Shall not a person be accepted of God, who acknowledges *Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the world*, who confesses him to be a great *Prophet* to instruct us, a *High Priest* to intercede for us, *a King* to rule and defend us, and an example to be imitated by us, and who receives him honestly under all these characters and offices: I say, cannot such a man be accepted of God, if he be sincere in all this, though he doth not know any other character or office which Christ sustains in the work of our salvation? Shall not he who receives the proposals of the gospel, and accepts the salvation of Christ as the great *Mediator between God and man*, in all its rules of holiness and its promises of happiness, shall not he be made a sharer in this salvation, unless he be acquainted with all the mediums whereby it is provided, procured, and applied to men? As for instance, will you say he shall have no benefit by the original covenant of redemption between God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, who doth not know there was such a covenant? Will you tell me, he cannot possibly be one of the elect of God, who hath not learned the doctrine of election? Must he not be a partaker of the blessings arising from the sacrifice or atonement of Christ, who is not acquainted with this atonement? Can he not be enlightened or sanctified by the Holy Spirit until he know and acknowledge the Holy Spirit as a divine enlightener and sanctifier: Who shall enlighten him in his doctrine, if the Spirit does not? Shall he never obtain persevering grace, who hath not learned to construe the promises of the covenant to extend to this perseverance? Pray, *Ferventio*, tell me, are you very sure that you now understand and receive every divine medium where this salvation is transacted between God the Father, and his Son Jesus, or between Jesus Christ and his people, so far as they may be revealed in the New Testament? And will you venture to exclude yourself from that salvation, if there should happen to be some or other of these divine mediums mentioned in the scripture which you have not yet learned or understood in the proper sense of it? Why then should *Agrippa* be utterly excluded from the blessings of the gospel, if he be sincerely willing to receive this salvation in the holiness and happiness of it, merely because he hath not yet learned the true doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ as one medium to procure it? Shall he have no part in this Saviour, and the benefits of his offices, while he is willing to receive them in general, and submit to them, merely because he does not descend into all your particularities about them? Must such a soul be cut off from all the privileges of the priesthood of Christ, who receives the High-Priest as an intercessor, but does not understand and receive his sacrifice in the true and complete scriptural sense of it? It is my opinion there may be many things necessary in the divine transactions relating to the salvation of men, towards the contriving, procuring, and applying this salvation, which perhaps may be also some way intimated in the word of God, which yet may not be necessary to be known and believed by every sinner that shall partake of this salvation: Nor do I

think it is proper for men to make the knowledge and belief of any of these things necessary to our acceptance with God, but what God himself has made so by most express language in his own word; which I cannot see concerning the atonement of Christ.

Query II. May not some of the texts of scripture which you have mentioned, as pronouncing the condemning sentence upon *Agrippa* and his followers, be very fairly and justly construed and explained into a milder and gentler sense? That in *Heb.* x. 26. most apparently means such a *wilful sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth*, as amounts to a stubborn and wilful rejection of the gospel of Christ, and not of one particular article in it: And for such persons *there remains no more sacrifice, &c.* And the expression of Peter concerning those *who bring upon themselves swift destruction, by denying the Lord that bought them*, 2 Peter ii. 1. certainly implies either a denial of God, the true God, the Father, who bought or redeemed the Jews for his people, as it is expressed in Deut. xxxii. 6. *Is he not thy Father who hath bought thee?* Or a more universal renunciation of Christ in all its offices, and not merely a denial of his atonement or the purchase of sinners by his blood. Where is there any such sentence of damnation in scripture denounced against those who do believe the gospel, but disbelieve the proper atonement of Christ, as our Saviour in *Mark* xvi. 16. pronounces against those, who under proper and sufficient evidence utterly reject the gospel itself? Concerning such persons it is said, *he that believeth not shall be damned:* But this is not said concerning those who disbelieve a real atonement, and without some such plain expression, it is hard to pronounce such a damnation merely by consequences.

Query III. Pray, *Ferventio*, be so good as to inform me when this doctrine of the proper atonement of Christ began to be necessary to salvation. It is certain it was not necessary in Christ's life-time, for St. Peter himself did not know that Christ should die when he said, *Far be it from thee, Lord;* Matt. xvi. 22. which was not long before his death. At the days of *Pentecost*, after the resurrection of Christ, when the gospel kingdom was set up in the world, Peter in his first sermon doth not speak a syllable of it; *Acts* ii. And as it is granted that Jesus in his own life hinted it but now and then, so in the whole history of the *Acts of the Apostles*, which contains an account of the primitive ministration of the gospel to the Jews and gentiles, this doctrine is very little mentioned. I must confess *Paulinus* has shewed to my surprise how continually this doctrine is insisted upon in the epistles of Paul, Peter, and John: Yet if we make scripture history our rule of judgment concerning facts, it seems probable that multitudes of souls became true believers in Christ, with very little acquaintance with this doctrine, or the profession of it, before those epistles were written. Must then the time of the writing and publishing those epistles be the precise date of this fundamental article? Which was the year, and which was the day, when the canon of scripture was so completed, and divulged, and received in the churches, that all the fundamental articles were settled at that period? And who gave *Ferventio* the notice of it?

Query IV. Supposing it could be made out that this is the general rule of scripture, as it is now completed, that *he that trusts not in the death of Christ as a proper atonement for sin shall never be pardoned;* yet is it not possible that the great and gracious God may know the particular circumstances under which some men are placed, the special prejudices that may be wrought in their minds even from infancy, and the unhappy influences they may be exposed to in their growing years, which may greatly excuse their

ignorance, and diminish their crime, though they may not yet understand nor receive the doctrine of the atonement of Christ in its full and proper sense? And may not such a view of things in the all-surveying eye of God, the merciful and righteous Judge of men, give occasion to mollify the rigour and severity of this rule, and to descend to a milder sentence? Nathan the prophet being sent from God, did not condemn David to die, though the general rule of the jewish law puts the adulterer to death. It is necessary indeed that the words of a public law should be strong and positive: But if the expressions in this case were positive and strong, is there no such thing as a court of equity in the breast of God, wherein some unhappy person may find relief, who may stand exposed to the general sentence of the public law, by some early and strong prejudices, which may have darkened his judgment, and led him astray from truth and duty? May not God have pity on such a creature and save him?

Query V. Is it not a possible thing that one good man may be suffered to fall so far into a mistake, as to believe *the atonement of Christ* is but figurative and emblematical, and not real and proper? Is it impossible that a sincere and diligent searcher of the truth, who loves and values his Bible, and reads it night and day, with prayer that he may learn the mind and will of his Maker there, should fall into the sentiments of *Agrippa* concerning the death of Christ? Do you pronounce it an utter impossibility that a man should be convinced of sin, should be humble and penitent before God, should return to his Maker in all the ways of known duty, and yet should mistake the true sense of such scriptures as speak of this atonement? Surely, I think, there are two or three persons of my acquaintance, whose souls are very sincere in their searches of divine truth, in order to practise all the known will of God, and yet they have not hitherto been persuaded to believe *that Christ was a proper propitiation for the sins of men by his death* in your sense: Is all their *repentance*, all their *love to God*, all their *holiness* and sincere desires to please him, all their *trust in Jesus Christ as a Mediator with the Father*, and their *submission* to him as a king, is it all made void by their ignorance of this one doctrine, *viz.* his atoning *sacrifice* in the scriptural sense of it?

I desire also to put in one word here concerning those who have all these characters of sincere christians, and yet doubt of the effectual and irresistible *influences of the Spirit of God in our day*, turning the hearts of sinners to God, and with an almighty power changing the bent of their souls to holiness. May not the blessed Spirit bestow this favour on any of those who know not this doctrine? Is such an ignorance an eternal bar against his enlightening and converting operations? Can they be enlightened in this truth without his influences? Will he for ever deny these blessings to those honest souls who happen to mistake the extent of his influences, and limit them only to the primitive times? I might repeat almost all the former questions with regard to this doctrine also, and ask if *Ferventio* would judge and condemn all such persons, and leave them no hope?

I wish *Ferventio* would answer such queries as these: I beg you would take them, Sir, into your further consideration when you are alone and retired. In the mean time I would appeal to *Charistes* here present, whether there is not a great deal to be said on the negative side of this question, concerning the necessity of believing these doctrines in order to the salvation of men.

And I, says *Ferventio*, will appeal to *Charistes* too, though I believe, by what I have

heard of him, that his charity is sometimes stretched to a length beyond my reach: But before he pronounces his opinion, I beg leave to make these two or three remarks on *Cavenor's* questions. The first is, that he has not so much as attempted to refute my arguments for the necessity of this doctrine, except only in mollifying the sense which I have given of two scriptures: So that almost every thing I have said stands in its full force, though he has been making queries on the contrary side: And, secondly, I beg *Charistes* to observe that the greatest part of *Cavenor's* defence may be applied to deists and infidels, as well as to *Agrippa*, with a little change of the words.

And my last remark is this, that *Cavenor* supposes a man may be truly pious and religious, in the practice of faith, repentance and holiness, who renounces this great and important doctrine of the gospel of which we have been treating; but this is what I cannot well assent to: And besides, I think there is a great deal of difference between the mere ignorance of these doctrines in a person who has no advantages for knowledge, and the renouncing them when they are set in so plain a light as to appear to be the express language and dictates of Christ and his apostles. And now I entreat you, *Charistes*, and I join with *Cavenor* to beg this favour of you, that you would tell us your sentiments on this subject.

SECTION VI.

THE DOCTRINES AFFIRMED, AND THEIR NECESSITY LIMITED AND ADJUSTED.

Charistes was very unwilling to become an umpire in such an awful and difficult debate; yet being much importuned, he did at last prevail upon himself, and began to explain himself in the following manner:

With regard to the arguments used by *Paulinus*, in vindication of these doctrines, I think, when put all together, they carry such weight and force with them, that I do not see how any reasonable person, who reads the New Testament, can well resist them, except he lies under the powerful and prevailing influence of some culpable prejudice. I must acknowledge also the reasonableness of *Ferventio's* zeal in a matter of so great importance in christianity. As these doctrines are so evidently a part of *that faith which was once delivered to the saints*, I do not wonder to see *Ferventio contend so earnestly for them*. It is proper to have their importance set before the mind in a solemn and awful light; and most of the arguments he has used seem to carry such a degree of evidence in them, as ought to awaken the spirits of those who are searching after divine knowledge, to take heed lest they drop any necessary part of the great salvation. I am of *Ferventio's* opinion, that our charity must not be boundless: It must have its proper limits according to scripture: Yet, I fear, he has expressed himself with a little too much severity and too little charity in some parts of his discourse on this subject.

And I fear then, said *Paulinus*, I shall fall under censure upon the same account. Perhaps my zeal for these great and blessed doctrines of the gospel may have given too much sharpness to some of my expressions, while I was pursuing a course of argument: But you will forgive me, *Charistes*, since you know that I have two sons here in London, in the midst of these errors and dangerous opinions. The young fellows do not want a natural genius, and I thank God, they have something of a serious turn towards religion

too; but they love to keep polite company, and if *Agrippa's* creed grow much in fashion, I fear they will be tainted with it, and lose a great deal of that christianity which I taught them in their younger years. It was that tender concern for the welfare of their souls which dwells always with me, that might help perhaps to give an edge and accent to some of my sentences, and I feel it inclines me sometimes to say a severe word or two against these growing and pernicious notions: And though after all that *Cavenor* has said in a way of excuse, I am still satisfied of the falsehood and danger of them, yet I am forced to acknowledge that in some of his questions he has suggested several thoughts, which may draw out the heart of a christian to greater degrees of moderation and candour than *Ferventio* seems to admit of. However, *Charistes*, I beg you would proceed to fulfil the request of these gentlemen here present, and shew us your opinion upon the subject of their debate.

I take a pleasure, Sir, said *Charistes*, to obey your orders at all times, and particularly since you have confirmed the request of these gentlemen: And I would therefore humbly propose it to the company, whether this contest between *Cavenor* and *Ferventio* about the *necessity of believing the atonement of Christ in order to salvation* may not be compromised by some such considerations as these:

Consideration I. There are some things which hold so very important a place in the christian religion, that in their very nature they seem to be essential to christianity, as it is a well-connected system of doctrines and practices, formed upon the complete revelation of the New Testament. These have been usually called *fundamentals*, from a supposition that the apostle enumerated them all; *Heb.* vi. 1. where he speaks of the *foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith towards God*, &c. and which are there called the *principles of the doctrine of Christ*. But I choose rather to call them *essentials*, to avoid something of those controversies which have been already formed upon the word *fundamentals*, and are attached to it.

Now among other characters which may be given of essentials or fundamentals, I look upon those things to be such essential parts of christianity, which being clearly revealed in the New Testament, many or most of the special privileges of it, and the special duties of it are contained in them or founded upon them: For these privileges and these duties are nothing else but the engagements which the gospel represents on God's side, and requires on ours, as it is properly a covenant of grace between God and man; and surely these engagements of blessings and duties are essential to this covenant, as it is a constitution in which two parties are mutually engaged, or at least which is proposed of God to be accepted of man.

Consideration II. Upon this account, the doctrine of the atonement of Christ for sin seems to me to be an essential part of christianity, because so many of the peculiar privileges and chief duties of it are so deeply interested therein, and are founded upon it.

As for the duties of repentance, faith, and hope, prayer and praise, love and obedience to God and Christ, this doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ is deeply concerned in them all. Doth not St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, *chapter* vi. build our hatred to sin, our repentance for it, and our mortification of it on the doctrine of the foregoing chapters, where he had treated largely on the atoning blood of the Son of God? *How shall we continue in sin since Christ died to remove it?* Is not our faith required to be *a faith in the blood of Christ?* Rom. iii. 25. Does not our hope depend on his death and his resurrection? *Rom.* v. 5, 6. and *chapter* viii. 34. *Are we not directed*

to pray in the name of our great High-Priest, who made reconciliation or atonement for sins? John xvi. 23, 24. Heb. ii. 17. and *chapter* iv. 14, 16. *Have we not access to God through this Mediator, who has made peace by the blood of his cross?* Eph. ii. 13—18. Is he not appointed our *Advocate with the Father, and our propitiation,* to encourage us to avoid every sin? 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. Must we not offer praise to our Lord Jesus Christ as the church in heaven does, because *he has redeemed us with his own blood?* Rev. v. 9, 13. Is not his *dying for us* represented as a reason and motive of our love and obedience to him, that is, *living to him?* 2 Cor. v. 15.

Thus much for the duties of the covenant of grace; and as for the promises and privileges of it, *viz.* Pardon of sin, justification, acceptance with God, answer of prayer, holy peace and joy, together with the expectation of heavenly blessedness, are not all these built, according to the writings of the apostles, on the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or his dying for our sins? *Rom.* v. 1—11. Is not the blood of Christ, which atones for sin, *Heb.* x. 10. called *the blood of the covenant?* in verse 29. *The blood of the everlasting covenant, whereby God becomes the God of peace;* Heb. xiii. 20. Is not this the blood of that sacrifice that has reconciled God and man, and brought them into a covenant of peace and mutual love? And indeed *without blood* under the law or gospel *there is no remission of sins,* no peace with God for sinners.

If you review all that *Paulinus* and *Ferventio* have said on this subject, and what has been cited from the late Doctor Evans, I think there cannot be much room to doubt whether the doctrine of *Christ's atoning sacrifice* be not an essential article in the christian covenant, so that our christianity is a very incomplete thing without it.

Let me ask one question here: What would you have thought of a man who pretended to be a Jew in the land of Israel during that dispensation, and yet did neither believe nor practise any thing relating to the sacrifices and offerings of atonement which were appointed by Moses, but renounced and neglected them all? Could you imagine this man was a sincere and complete Jew? Or could he be a hearty believer and practiser of the religion of Moses? How then can a man be called a complete christian, who renounces the only sacrifice of atonement which belongs to the christian religion, and which is the only medium of our forgiveness of sins? The man who denies and renounces this essential doctrine, though in common language he has the name of christian given him, the name being determined by the major part of his opinions, yet if names were to be applied by the rules of strict proportion and justice, I do not see how his character could arise higher than that of *almost a christian.*

As these words were pronounced, *Ferventio* rose up, for he was grown big with an inference which he could not suppress. Upon this foot, says he, *Agrippa* can scarce be half a christian, for his creed has dropped so many of these essentials of christianity, that I fear he is almost a christian. But pray, *Charistes,* go on to your third consideration. I obey, Sir, said *Charistes,* and pursued his discourse:

Consideration III. All the essentials of christianity can hardly be supposed necessary to be believed or acknowledged in order to the salvation of every man; for *Ferventio* himself has confessed that his own charity might extend so far as to include a heathen within the reach of salvation, who should be religious and penitent, desirous to know and do the will of God, and to trust in his mercy so far as the light of nature can trace out his mercy and his will, provided that he never had opportunity or means to know Christ and his gospel, and consequently neither knows nor believes any one of the

peculiar essentials * of christianity. It is hard to make incurable ignorance a ground of utter condemnation. And therefore it is certain, that when our Saviour commands his *gospel to be preached to all*, and pronounces *damnation on him that believes it not*, there must be sufficient light and evidence supposed: And none can incur this sentence but such as by some fault of the will, either neglect, avoid, or resist this evidence.

Consideration IV. If this be admitted, will it not follow then, that there is no one of all the peculiar essentials of christianity, which are absolutely and certainly necessary to salvation, where there has not been sufficient means of light and evidence for the knowledge of them? And consequently the necessary requisites to the salvation of particular persons in christianity itself, as well as in all the rest of the dispensations of God towards fallen man, must be as various as are the cases and circumstances of every particular person, with regard to their different opportunities and advantages for light and knowledge.

And upon this foot of reasoning, not only in different nations and in different ages, the things that are necessary to the salvation of particular persons must be very different, according to the different revelations and advantages under which they lived, but even in the same nation and the same age, some of those articles of christianity may be necessary to the salvation of those persons who live in religious families, and in towns where the gospel is preached in its fulness and glory, which articles are not necessary to the salvation of those who live in obscure villages, among rocks and woods, in little cottages and dark corners of the country, where there is no preaching, and where very few people are possessed of Bibles, or are able to read them. Some points of faith and practice may be necessary for those who are educated in the constant profession of them, amongst the brightest evidences of reason and scripture to support them, which may not be necessary to those who are bred up from their infancy amidst the contrary errors, and are surrounded and clouded with a thousand unavoidable prejudices against them. It is only a neglect or resistance of light that renders error so very criminal a thing.

Consideration V. Thence it will follow, that however christian churches must form the best judgment they can for themselves, how many of these essentials of christianity are necessary to be professed in order to church-fellowship, which affair must be transacted by the general rules of scripture and men's outward profession, yet it is God alone, who is the supreme and final Judge of men's eternal states, that can determine how much of these essentials in faith or practice is necessary to the salvation of each particular person: He alone knows the precise measure of light and evidence which is sufficient to convince every man of the truth, and it is he who has authority to say, *The soul that believes it not shall be damned.* I say, it is he alone has sufficient penetration and cognizance of the situation and circumstances, and the workings of the heart of every person, to apply his own rules always without mistake. In his divine balance he exactly ponders the weight of every unavoidable prejudice, and every difficulty from within and without, under which a person labours in his enquiries after truth. He can make just allowances for them all when he decides their state. He surveys also all the

* Essentials of christianity are either common or peculiar. Common are those which it borrows from natural religion, such as the being of God, the necessity of holiness, repentance for sin, and hoping for mercy. The peculiar essentials of it are *the atonement of Christ, his intercession, faith in him,* praying *in his name, baptism, the Lord's Supper, &c.*

exercises of humble dependence on his grace, all the fervent prayers which have been offered up by such a soul for divine light and conduct; and all these shall be put into the balance in order to judgment: The Lord *the Judge of the whole earth will do right;* Gen. xviii. 25. It is his own work, and he transfers it not to us.

Consideration VI. Yet still we may venture to assert, that where there are great and constant advantages for light and for acquaintance with the whole christian religion, it is a matter of the utmost hazard to renounce so important and so essential an article of christianity as this of the *atoning sacrifice of Christ.* A man had need be well assured of his sincerity in searching after truth, and that he has indulged no criminal prejudice, no secret bias of passion, no warpings of heart by humour or interest, no vain elations of the pride of reason and self-sufficiency; he had need be very conscious also that he has earnestly sought light and instruction of God, together with his own honest enquiries, and that he has never wilfully neglected or avoided any evidence: I say, a man had need be well assured of all this, who reads this doctrine daily in his New Testament so plainly expressed and so often repeated there, and yet denies this truth, abandons this refuge of a guilty creature, and renounces this divine hope. A man had need have very bright evidences of the steady uprightness of his soul in reading the scripture, and seeking the way of salvation there, without pride or partiality, who confesses himself a sinful creature, and yet, with the New Testament in his hands, refuses to receive this blessed provision of grace which is there offered, and dares venture into the presence of a holy and sin-avenging God without a propitiation, without a sacrifice.

I desire it may be observed here, that several things which I have asserted concerning the *propitiation of the blood of Christ might be also applied to the sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost,* but perhaps not in the same degree; for though I believe these operations to be an essential part of christianity, yet they may not be quite so powerfully pronounced in scripture, or not so largely argued, or not so frequently repeated, as the atonement of Christ is, and therefore, perhaps, the necessity of acknowledging that doctrine may not be quite so great. I am verily persuaded, and I think there is reason for it in scripture, that no man shall be saved who is not made partaker of both these blessings; nor do I pretend to say which is most necessary to the salvation of men in the great scheme and counsels of God. If a heathen that knows not Christ be ever accepted of God and forgiven, *it is through the atonement which the blood of Christ has made.* If ever he be renewed to repentance and holiness, *it is through the influence of the blessed Spirit.* And though some who call themselves christians may not receive nor profess these truths, yet if ever they are saved, it must be by the participation of these blessings, whether they will believe and acknowledge it or no; and they are infinitely more indebted to Christ their Redeemer, and the Spirit their Sanctifier, than Christ and the Spirit are to them. Whosoever is elect or chosen to salvation, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, it is through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;* 1 Peter i. 2. And may God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have all due acknowledgments and honours.

I will allow to *Cavenor* that there may be many of the divine mediums whereby our salvation was either contrived, procured, or applied, which may not be clearly revealed unto us, and therefore are not necessary to be acknowledged by us: But those mediums, viz. the *sacrifice of Christ,* and the *operations of the Holy Spirit,* which are so carefully

and so plainly revealed to us in scripture, that our personal transactions with the great God may be managed through the merit of the one, and the influence of the other, these are necessary to be acknowledged and received, wheresoever this revelation comes with sufficient light and evidence. What are the chief reasons, why the names of the Son of God and his blessed Spirit are revealed from heaven to be of standing use, in the religion of mankind, through all the ages of christianity, if it be not that one may be acknowledged as the Redeemer of his people, and the other as the Sanctifier; and that there may be a continual dependence on the merit of the one, and the influences of the other, in all our transactions with God? *It is through Jesus, who is our peace-maker by his blood, that we both Jews and gentiles have our access by one Spirit unto the Father;* Eph. ii. 18. *The blood of the sacrifice has paved out a new and living way to God,* and the powerful influences of the Spirit conduct us in that way. Dreadful hazard of missing God, if we renounce the way, when it is so plainly shewn us, and refuse this divine Coductor who offers his assistance!

I must confess, for my own part, I would not for a world venture my soul upon the mere mercy of God without any regard to the atonement of Christ, nor trust to be renewed by the powers of nature without seeking the operations of the Spirit of grace, since they are revealed in scripture with so much evidence: Yet neither to gain a world would I dare set up for a judge, and pronounce hell and damnation upon any such humble and sincere soul, as *Cavenor* saith he is acquainted with; such a soul who repents of sin, who loves God heartly, and receives the gospel of Christ as his only hope; and, at the same time, with humble prayer and diligence seeks after all divine truth, though he has not yet been able to receive these doctrines, in the full scriptural sense of them, and is afraid to believe them for want of fuller conviction. Wheresoever such a person is found, I am well persuaded, the blessed God, who is himself the Author of all this good work in his heart, will not suffer him to perish for want of knowledge. *Our great High-Priest can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way;* Heb. v. 2. If the belief of his atonement be necessary to their salvation, he will find ways to illuminate the mind and convince the concience, and will rather send an angel or an apostle to them, as he did to *Cornelius,* than that any sincere penitent should fall under a condemning sentence.

SECTION VII.

THE TRANSCENDENT ADVANTAGES OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST, AND THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT TOWARD ALL CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

WHEN *Charistes,* had finished his discourse, *Cavenor* acknowledged how much he was pleased and profited by the greatest part of it: And I think, said he, I shall become a convert of *Paulinus* and you, if you can clear up one point of difficulty that sticks with me still; and that is, that you suppose the christian duties of repentance, faith, and love, prayer, and hope, with universal obedience, to be built on this particular doctrine of the atonement for sin by the blood of Christ. I confess the scriptures you have brought seem to give some countenance to it; but does not *Agrippa's* creed secure the necessity of all the same duties? Suppose that Christ died, only as a martyr for the

doctrine of pardon and peace and eternal life, to be obtained by repentance and new obedience; or suppose yet further, that he was put to death also to shew, in a way of emblem, that sin deserved death; are not christians under the same obligations to believe the doctrine of Christ, and to fulfil these duties, as though *he died a sacrifice to make atonement for sin?* This is certain, that the blessed God would never send his own Son to our earth, nor would his Son ever come down from heaven, merely to bring messages of notion and speculation to mankind, if they have not a peculiar and considerable influence upon the practice of piety and virtue. Tell me therefore plainly, *Charistes*, what advantages has the doctrine of the atonement of Christ and the sanctifying operations of the Spirit to promote practical godliness, so much beyond *Agrippa's* creed.

This task, replied *Charistes*, I readily and cheerfully accept, and will endeavour to make it appear in several instances, what a superior influence on true piety and goodness our doctrines have above all that *Agrippa's* creed can pretend to.

And first, let us begin with the *atonement of Christ.* The peculiar advantages that it has to promote all christian duties are such as these:

I. It gives us a more awful and dreadful sense of sin, and awakens us by a more solemn motive to sincere and hearty repentance: For hereby it appears that sin is so highly offensive to the blessed God, that he could not think fit to forgive it in his creatures, even where he designed to shew mercy to them, without requiring some compensation for the honours of his broken law; and that by such a glorious sacrifice as his own Son. Does not sin appear more hateful when God thought it requisite that such a divine person, who is *One with the Father*, should pay down his life and blood, and yield to so many agonies of soul, if he would undertake to expiate the guilt of it? What is there in all the pretences of the death of Christ as a witness to the truth of his gospel, or as a mere representation of what our sins deserved; what is there, I say, in all this, comparable to the grand and awful idea, that the Son of God must be made a sacrifice before the evil of sin could be removed, even by a God of mercy and forgiveness? This more powerfully excites us to hate all sin, and that with greater detestation, to seek the mortification of it with a warmer zeal, to mourn more sensibly for our past transgressions, and to walk with greater watchfulness for time to come, lest we again defile our souls with such abominations which the soul of God hates with so intense and irreconcileable a hatred.

II. This doctrine of the atonement of Christ for our sins, raises in us much more grand and sublime ideas both of the justice and of the mercy of God, than if sin were pardoned, without an atonement, and teaches us to contemplate those perfections of the divine nature with double veneration and acknowledgment. By this means our religious fear of God will be greatly increased, and our love to him be inflamed to a much higher degree, as indeed the benefit of our forgiveness, when it is set in this light, requires. Sinners will be more effectually deterred from venturing to affront that justice which will not suffer mercy itself to pardon sin without a satisfaction to the rights of government. Such justice will be more revered which would not spare the Son of God himself when he had undertaken to become a sponsor for guilty creatures: And mercy will be adored with so much greater gratitude, since God himself, the person offended, hath in his rich mercy found out and provided such a full satisfaction for his justice. I do but hint these things, *Cavenor*, in brief language to your judgment in this conver-

sation, which if mentioned by a preacher, would furnish out abundant matter for amplification and oratory.

III. The condescension, the compassion and love of our blessed Saviour is represented in a much more glorious light by this doctrine of his suffering as a sacrifice in the room and stead of guilty creatures, and it should engage our returns in love in a much higher proportion. Pray, *Cavenor*, think with yourself, should a person come down from heaven to preach to you forgiveness of sins upon repentance, and in order to assure you of the truth and authority of his commission, should he expose himself to death to bear witness to his message, or should he suffer himself to be put to death to shew you in emblem what your sins required; would this represent his love and compassion to you in half so high a degree, as if you who are the offender were demanded by God himself to terrible and eternal execution, unless you could find a surety to suffer for you, and the blessed Jesus stepped forth and freely became your surety, and had the agonies and the anguish of death executed upon him in your stead; and suppose thereupon you were not only released from bonds, but had also a title to eternal life given you on the account of what he had done and suffered? Methinks the love manifested in the one case above the other is superior to all comparison, and demands a more abundant measure of our gratitude and affection.

As for the mere proof of his commission to publish pardon to penitents, the *miracles of Christ* effected this much more than his death could do: Nay his death could never have done it without his miracles. All that his voluntary death could pretend to, was to witness his own sincerity in bringing this message, but it could never of itself prove this message to be divine. And as for the demonstration of what our sins deserved, this was perhaps more effectually manifested to the world in emblem by bleeding lambs and bullocks every day, month, and year, than by the single death of Christ once in six thousand years. But neither miracles, nor bullocks, nor lambs, no wonders wrought, nor bleeding beasts sacrificed, could ever express such amazing pity and love as the Son of God expressed by dying as our *surety*, agonizing in the midst of torments which you should have suffered, and expiring in your stead. Would not this excite and kindle your love to a dying Saviour in a much superior degree to all the representations and pretences of *Agrippa's* creed; And would you not think all your zeal and your future diligence in obedience infinitely his due, who had done and suffered so much for you? These thoughts were doubtless warm and powerful in the heart of the blessed apostle, when he *is crucified and grows dead to every thing by the cross of Christ*, when he lives only to the service of Christ, *who loved me, saith he, and gave himself for me.*

IV. Our faith and hope in the pardoning grace of God is greatly encouraged, and confirmed, and exalted to much higher degrees by the appearance of Christ's dying as a surety and substitute in our room and stead, than ever it could be by the mere supposition of his death as an attestation to the truth of his doctrine, or as a mere emblem of what our sins deserved. Let me represent the matter to you, *Cavenor*, in this manner: Suppose a whole province under the dominion of some great king should have rebelled against him, and as he has shewn himself upon all occasions a prince of strict justice, so he has made it appear that he has equal sentiments of compassion and mercy: Suppose this offended sovereign should send his only Son with a message of forgiveness to all that would lay down their arms and return to their allegiance, and should appoint

him to yield up his life to discover how sincere he was in the delivery of his Father's message: Or suppose he should be required to die in their sight, in order to represent to them that each one of all those millions of rebels had deserved death; I grant there would be some encouragement for these traitors to repent and return to their duty, and trust in the mercy of their king: Though by the way, this king would seem to be not over-wise, if he were so lavish of the life and blood of his own Son, as to appoint a person of his dignity to die for two such purposes, as a much meaner and more ignoble life might attain.

But now on the other hand, suppose he should send them a much kinder message by his Son, *viz.* that though they had been guilty of such rebellion, yet he was very unwilling so large a province of his dominion should perish, and yet his laws and his government demanded their lives, unless some surety or substitute could be found who had dignity enough to equal the value of all the guilty number, and at the same time had compassion enough to stand in their stead and to become a sacrifice for them: Suppose then that the king's Son himself by the Father's appointment should *give up himself as a surety and sacrifice to die in their room,* and to redeem their lives with his own, with assurance that every repenting criminal should enjoy the benefit of this redemption. As this would be a much more abundant evidence of the justice and mercy of the king, would it not also encourage the faith and hope of the poor guilty creatures in his forgiveness to a much superior degree, when they saw the royal sacrifice as their surety bleeding before them? Such is the goodness of the Son of God; such is the mercy of the Father; and now the sinners amongst mankind who repent and trust in this mercy, may be more abundantly assured of forgiveness, for they can say *God is not only faithful to his word, but just to his Son in forgiving penitent offenders; he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, for the blood of Jesus Christ his Son redeemeth and cleanseth us from all unrighteousness;* 1 John i. 7, 9. He will never exact the dreadful punishment of the principal offenders since he has received so honourable a satisfaction from the surety. Here is justice itself as well as mercy engaged on the side of forgiveness, which gives a bolder assurance to our faith and hope of pardon and salvation.

V. I might add that our holy freedom or confidence in prayer is raised higher, and all our addresses to the throne of grace in and by Jesus as a Mediator and Intercessor, are much more animated, encouraged, and supported by the sacrifice of the Son of God than by any of the doctrines of *Agrippa's* creed: And therefore the sacred writer to the Hebrews expresses himself thus, chapter x. verse 19. *We have boldness or confidence, brethren, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;* and verse 22. *Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled,* that is, with this blood, from an evil or guilty conscience. But *Ferventio* has paraphrased on this text already, and therefore I am brief. Besides our prayers gain further encouragement hereby, for we know now that the risen and ascended Saviour pleads for nothing on our account but what he himself has purchased with his own blood: And we venture to ask the biggest and the best of his blessings in his name, because he pleads for them all as the fruit of his own purchase, for he has paid the price of his life for them, when *he died to redeem us from every curse.* Thus much in respect of the several christian duties that relate to God and his Son Jesus.

VI. In the last place let us consider what influence the death of Christ as a sacrifice in our stead may have upon our love, and all our consequent duties to our fellow-

creatures, above and beyond what the death of Christ could have in any other view. Here we shall be plentifully convinced if we do but take one single scripture and try to explain it both ways; that is 1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Agrippa* would explain it thus: Jesus the Son of God bore testimony to his gospel with his own blood, or he suffered death to shew us by way of emblem what our sins required, and therefore we ought to lay down our lives for one another. Surely the inference here does not seem so strong, nor the connection so plain as to reach the conscience of every christain with evidence and power. But if *Paulinus* were to explain it, I dare venture even in his presence to say that he would make the force of St. John's reasoning appear much more evident and constraining thus: Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom this evangelist more than once represents as God himself, took human flesh and blood upon him, that he might be capable of dying as a ransom for his brethren, the sons of men; and he actually laid down his life as a surety to save them from dying: Surely then we who are the followers of Christ should be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren, when providence calls us to it. I need not ask you, *Cavenor*, which of these doctrines carries the plainest and strongest inference and motive with it for our love to our fellow-christians, even in the most glorious and self-denying instances of it?

Thus far have I been shewing some of the advantages which the death of Christ, considered as an atonement for sin, has to engage us in all christian duties above the view of his death in any other consideration. Let me now speak a word or two to shew how sweet and powerful an influence the doctrine of our regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit of God has to encourage us to repentance and holiness, and to make us truly penitent and holy, above those views and purposes of the mere extraordinary operations of the Spirit which *Agrippa* represents.

Agrippa tells us by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit of God, the divine promise of pardon upon our repentance is confirmed and established: And I grant, *Cavenor*, that this has, or should have, a very proper moral influence on men to repent, and it is a spring of powerful persuasion to sinners to return to God. But when a poor convinced awakened sinner finds his nature strongly inclined to evil, and the thoughts of his heart running after vanity and folly; when he experiences in himself a natural aversion to what is holy and divine, as well as weakness to what is good; when he feels how feeble are all his best vows and resolutions, though repeated a hundred times over; when he finds himself surrounded with a thousand temptations in this world on all sides; to allure his heart away from God, and to discourage him in his pursuit of piety and virtue, he is ready to sink under the mighty discouragements, and to give up all for lost; for he finds himself by no means able to subdue his own corruptions, nor to vanquish the temptations which on every side attack him. Here it is he wants a mighty helper. And if he can read among the blessings of the gospel the promised aids and influences of the blessed Spirit to be given to them who ask it, in order to mortify his sins, to strengthen him for every duty, to change his evil nature, and *renew the image of God* in him, and enable him to vanquish his huge temptations; this puts new life and courage into his heart, and awakens and invigorates all the springs of activity within him. He works out his own salvation with all holy diligence, because God has promised his Spirit *to work in him both to will and to do;* Luke xi. 13. Rom. viii. 11—14. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

And what think you now, *Cavenor?* Are not these advantages toward all the duties

of the christian life which are derived from the doctrine of *Paulinus*, vastly transcendent to all the principles of *Agrippa's* creed?

Here *Cavenor* seemed to stand musing in a sort of astonished silence, and at last with tears in his eyes broke out into a passionate address to heaven. "Forgive me, O my God, that ever I consented to forsake those holy doctrines which I was taught in my younger years. Blessed Jesus, forgive me that ever I should be so easily led astray from thy word, and part with the blessings of thy atoning sacrifice, and thy sanctifying Spirit. I lie at thy foot a humble penitent, and willing convert to thy divine truths, which these my dear friends have been sent this day by providence to set before me in so powerful and convincing a light: And may I never dare to make the least departure from them again, though under the strongest temptations, but live and die under their blessed influence,"

SECTION VIII.

A QUESTION ABOUT A MINISTER'S PREACHING AGRIPPA'S DOCTRINE RESOLVED, WITH HEARTY PETITIONS FOR AGRIPPA AND ALL HIS FOLLOWERS.

THIS last scene had something in it so tender and pious, so powerful and affecting, that the whole company felt a sacred and uncommon pleasure. *Paulinus* and *Ferventio* abundantly expressed the joy of their hearts, nor was *Charistes* wanting in his thankfulness to God on this occasion. *Cavenor*, when the devout rapture a little subsided, turned himself to *Paulinus* and *Charistes*, and in a most moving manner expressed the everlasting obligations he lay under to their discourses. You have recovered me, said he, by the grace of God from the dangerous snare in which I was held captive, and reduced me to the faith of the gospel. Pray, *Paulinus*, permit me to copy out your queries, that I may convey them to *Agrippa*. Who knows what happy influence they may have towards his recovery too, if the blessed Spirit of God concur with my design? I thank you also, good *Ferventio*, for that share you have had in my conversion; for though I could not but suspect some want of charity in your discourse, and perhaps I replied a little too roughly, yet your words had so much spirit in them, and carried with them such smart flashes of light, as made their way to my conscience, helped to awaken my stupor, roused me out of my indolence and mistake, and made me more susceptive of better instructions.

I am glad, said *Ferventio*, If any thing I have said hath been blessed by the providence of God to any useful purpose; and I hope I have not lost my share of profit by all this conversation. Yet I beg leave before the company parts, to ask *Charistes* one question relating to the foregoing part of his discourse. He has informed us of his charitable sentiments towards persons who are called christians, and yet do not believe those two great and blessed doctrines of christianity; I cannot deny Sir, but there are some appearances of reason in what you have spoken, and perhaps it is not proper to pronounce an universal sentence of condemnation upon these men. I grant some of my expressions may have been too positive, warm, and severe, and shall think more of your manner of reasoning, in order to enlarge my charity towards persons under great errors. But what would you say, Sir, to one who pretends to be a minister of the gospel, who denies these doctrines, and preaches to the people *Agrippa's* creed? For

my part, I declare my opinion freely, I cannot believe him to be a minister of Christ or his gospel, and I should think it my duty to discourage his preaching to the utmost, and persuade all my friends to avoid him as they would avoid poison, or the pestilence. I think it is preaching *another gospel*, as St. Paul calls it; *Gal.* i. 6—9. or such a perversion of the gospel of Christ, that *if any man* whatsoever, *or an angel from heaven should preach it*, I believe the great apostle would say, *Let him be accursed.*

Truly, Sir, replied *Charistes*, though I have learned to attend with reverence and profit upon the labours of ministers who have had very different sentiments upon many points in christianity, yet I think I should never encourage men to set up for ministers of the gospel, who renounce two of the chief doctrines for which a gospel ministry seems to be instituted, who abandon two of the chief mediums by which sinners are invited and encouraged to repent and return to God, and who leave out of their preaching the two chief blessings for which Christ and the Spirit were revealed to the world. I could never think it my duty to give them any countenance in their work: I could never say, *God speed, lest I should be partaker of their evil deeds;* 2 John 10, 11. Yet since I am not an apostle, I would not pronounce a curse upon them, but I would pray for them with sincere and hearty addresses to the mercy-seat, that they might be taught better themselves before they proceeded to teach others, lest if *the blind lead the blind* through a false way, in the midst of day-light and sun-beams and many warnings, *they should both fall into the pit* and perish in their chosen darkness.

May the God of light and truth open the eyes of all such as go astray, guide them into the paths of grace and peace, and incline them to submit their souls to his conduct in the way of happiness! May they be so wise as to take heed, that they resist not any degrees of scriptural light breaking in upon their minds in their searches after knowledge, lest they provoke God to abandon them to their own darkness for ever. *He is a jealous God*, tender of the honours and offices of his Son, and of the dignity of his blessed Spirit in his divine operations. Far be it from me in the midst of my charitable language, to speak any thing that should encourage the dangerous opinions of *Agrippa* and his disciples: But I heartily lift up these petitions for them, that the good Spirit of God would shew them their mistakes, and *recover them from every snare of the devil.* May he release their souls from every criminal prejudice, and guard their enquiries from every dangerous error, that being converted to the faith of Jesus, as our great *sacrifice of atonement*, and seeking and enjoying the sanctifying influences of *the Holy Spirit*, they may become honourable professors of the gospel in the peculiar glories of it, and being thus trained up for heaven, may at last be possessed of complete salvation!

These pious wishes of *Charistes* were pronounced with such an air of devotion and goodness, that all the gentlemen present added their hearty *amen* to them. *Ferventio* was so much pleased with all his discourse and his agreeable manner, that since he found *Charistes* amidst all his charity maintained a zeal for the truths of the gospel, he took a good liking to the man, and entreated further acquaintance with him. Here the conversation ended, and the company broke up with mutual civilities.

THE END OF VOL. III.

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